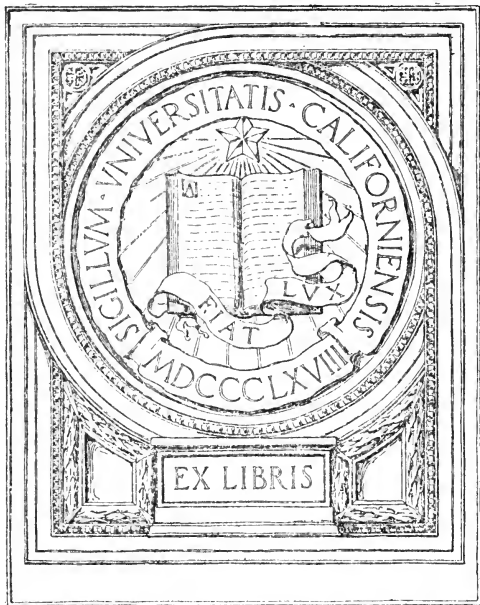


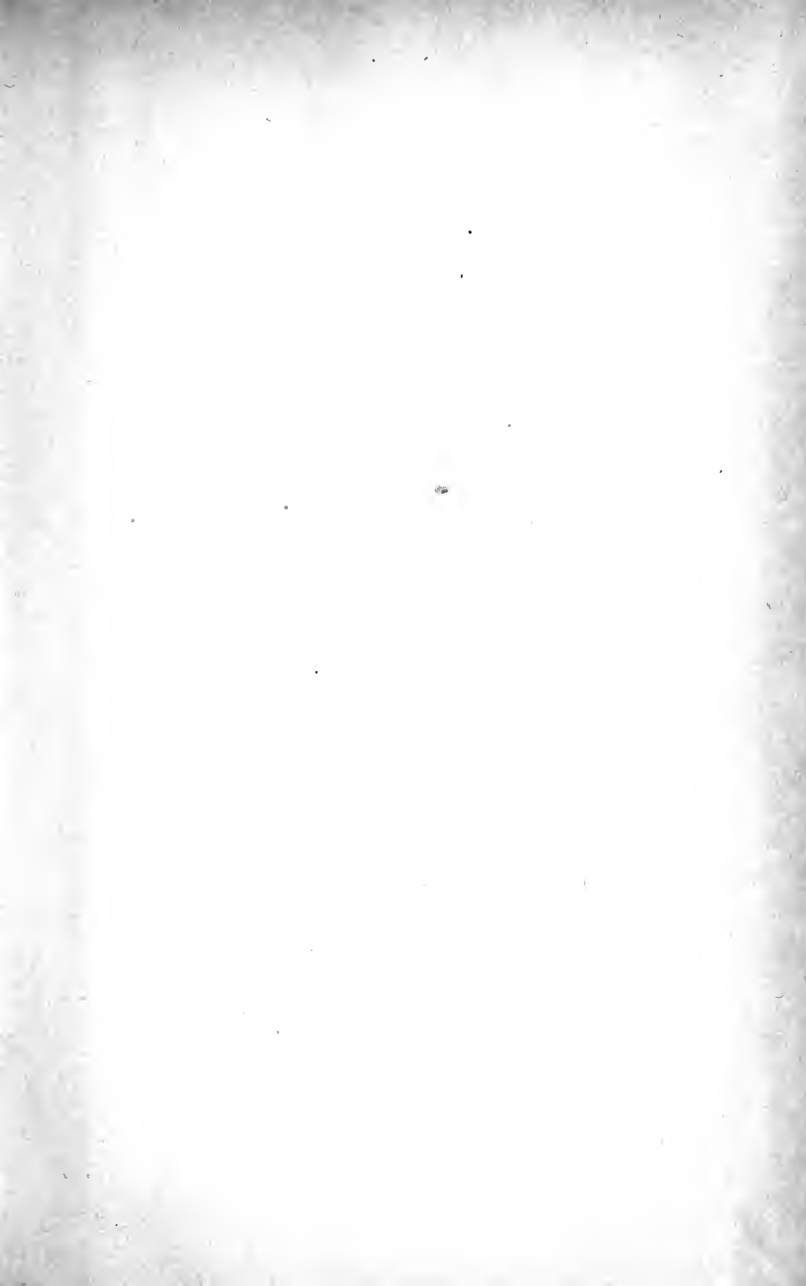
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SIMBA

By

STEWART EDWARD WHITE



GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
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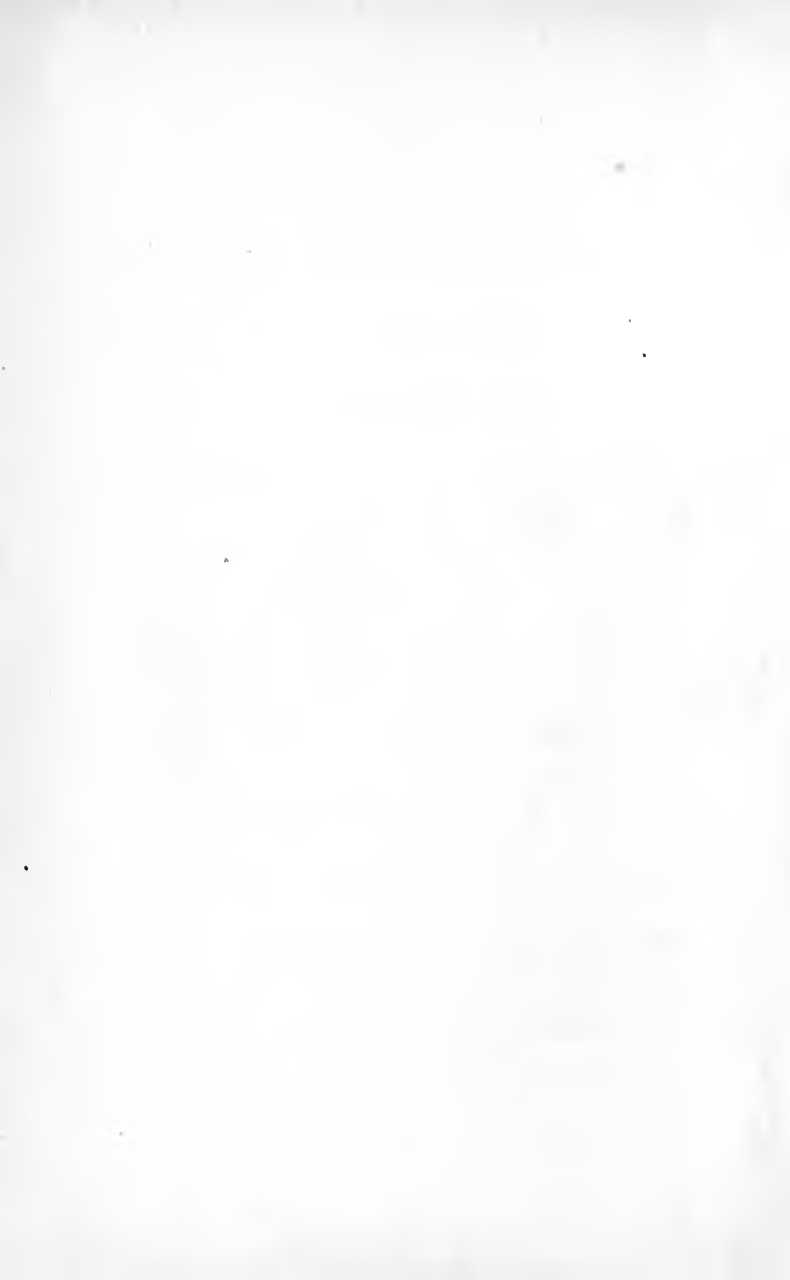
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SIMBA



SIMBA

CHAPTER I

THE NAMING

WHEN his first-born son was big enough to toddle about on his own two legs, M'Kuni sent him out with the boys and old men to herd the cattle. As yet the son had only a variety of child-names—endearing little names such as indicated the real affection in which he was held. Of course he must choose his own man's name; but as yet he had shown no disposition to do so.

M'Kuni was a man of considerable importance. He owned a round house with a conical thatched roof; two spears, one for war with a long slender blade, and one for the chase shaped like a leaf; four wives, of whom one young; three wicker doors; a shield of genuine buffalo hide; considerable wire and bead jewellery; sufficient clothing of goat skin

to satisfy his sketchy ideas on the subject, and nearly five hundred head of cattle. He led a thoroughly satisfactory life. The immemorial traditions of his people were well known to him, so he made few mistakes of action and therefore had very little bad luck. When he had crossed a stream he always spat on a pebble and threw it back into the current; when birds crossed him from right to left he never omitted to count them and conduct his day by their omen; not once did he fail to avert his face when meeting the mother of any of his wives. And so with a thousand other little things. M'Kuni was an alert-minded savage. He never forgot or overlooked. It is well known that the gods have no concern with mental attitudes. Ignorance or forgetfulness are no excuses. They want results.

. All night M'Kuni and his four wives and his various children slept quite comfortably in the circular hut while the five hundred cattle stamped and lowed and splashed about inside the tiny corral that enclosed both them and the house; and other cattle belonging to other houses next door on either side did the same. A heavy thorn wall

surrounded the collection of houses and corrals and so made the village.

Soon after dawn the women and older children stirred. The gates were opened. Out from the thorn *boma* thronged the masses of cattle. They stretched their necks and lowed, and the heavy vibrating diapason overcame even the roar of the lions returning full-fed to their lairs. From a rise near by they would have looked like a spreading dark sluggish flow. They were small, plump, gentle cattle with humps of fat above their shoulders. Their herders drove them to the pastures appointed, and there all day they fed in compact bodies, shimmering in the hot heat mirage like varicoloured patches against the low hills.

When he felt so inclined M'Kuni came into the open air. He always had plenty to do. He could go out to count his cattle and keep acquainted with every individual of them; he could visit his cronies in the village; he could squat outside the council of the elders listening to tales and wise talk; he could oversee the primitive agricultural work performed by his wives; he could polish with wood ashes and herb juice the metal of his or-

naments and weapons; he could join a hunting party on the veldt; he could sit in his own doorway and play with his own children of whom there was always abundance. M'Kuni, like the majority of his people, was very fond of children so the last-named occupation appealed to him most of all.

In his first born M'Kuni took a never-ebbing delight. Never had been such a boy, so straight, so confident, so bold! None of the others could compare with this one! Although the word *toto* was a general one meaning *children*, it was always understood that when M'Kuni said *toto* he meant this boy. And so gradually he became known as Toto pending the choosing of his man-name.

Toto ran stark naked save for a polished brass amulet, and shave-headed save for a trig tuft at his crown. And the day he went forth with the cows he carried a tiny spear.

II

IT WAS a wonderful life. The small, naked, lively little figures darted here and there shouting in

childish treble. The huge, placid beasts obeyed. And then the sun-saturated day on the high veldt, with a wind blowing, and clouds like ships sailing to the edge of the world and over, and the great herds of game feeding in the hollows, and birds wheeling with cries. Toto and his companions stood upon rocks, and watched lest calves stray within reach of hyenas, and ran about with their shrill cries whenever the herd threatened to lose its compactness. For in concentration alone was safety. And between times they shrieked at each other, or played games of war or hunting.

It may be believed that for a very little boy there were many terrors stalking among the strangenesses of the veldt. Things glided half-seen in the grass; they lurked in shadow; they rustled in thickets; they peered from the dimness of trees. Africa real is a realm of enchantment and dangers; and to Africa real must be added the Africa fantastic of the small-boy imagination supplemented by the overheard fireside tales of elder small boys with awestruck, shining eyes. Sleeping lions, leopards, rhinoceros, buffalo; lurking hyenas, baboons; hidden snakes and crocodiles and other

matters of like significance were serious enough hazards, heaven knows. But when one thinks of the Great Gray Hyena whose footfall makes no sound and whose attack is always from the rear; or of the little black man who dwells in rocks and fastens his teeth in throats; or of the invisible Thing whose sole manifestation is its shrieking voice and its biting claws—or indeed a dozen of the equally sociable creatures—why, then one cannot be blamed for looking upon the great, quiet, humpbacked cattle as familiar friends. Especially since the world around is very large and one's self is very small. And a wild-eyed, dashing, breathless foray to yonder point of rocks and back may require the resolution of a Great Adventure. The only comfort was that most of these things, from lions on, were deadliest at night. But one can never be sure!

Toto's most intimate friend was a youngster slightly older than himself named Maongo. This youth was a very wonderful being because he happened to be two years older and to possess a nature whose stupidity manifested itself in aloofness. Therefore Toto did his best to show off

before Maongo, dashing a little farther out than any one else, displaying unusual zeal in his simple duties, talking with a swagger, acting in imitation of the best models among his elders; and always with a concealed side glance to discover how the older boy was taking it. The older boy was, in general, taking it very well. That is to say, he was so fully occupied with his own inmost being that he paid no great attention to his small adorer. Once he aroused himself to clip Toto savagely over the head. Thereupon Toto adored him more than ever, a fact that has little to do with this part of our story, but should be filed for future reference.

Besides tending cattle there were other activities such as tagging along behind his mother to the broad, sluggish, muddy river and there watching her wash beans, or he might go with her into the still, vine-entangled, mysterious forest. There she hacked at huge trees with a ridiculous, short-handled axe whose blade was not more than two inches wide, shrieking at her neighbours, consumed with giggles and jokes. It seemed to Toto that she had been chipping at the same tree for an incred-

ible series of days, which was true; and he foresaw no result. The idea never occurred to him that the labour had any ulterior end beyond the mere fun of it. That was considerable. The axe made a most satisfying slamming noise against the silence of the forest; every once in a while a white chip fell away. The shadows were cool there, after the sun outside, and the monkey-people carried on most amusing business in the upper world. And one wonderful day there materialized in the background a great shadowy mass, without sound, quietly, as though in the depths of the other shadows this one great, dark one had thickened like a cloud. And one by one other masses materialized until there were six of them. Toto stared with all his eyes. He caught the gleam of yellow-white, the slow sway and swing of moving things. And then suddenly he saw eyes, little wicked eyes, staring at him.

His mother and the other women had fallen silent. They picked up their little axes, and the goat-skin shawls they had cast aside, and quietly and unhastingly withdrew, step by step, ceremonially, without turning their backs. And the

great, strange things stood swaying until the women had departed, then came forward into the clearing, as though taking possession of a right.

"What was it?" Toto asked his mother.

"They were my Lords, the Elephants, who wished to use their own," she replied.

And when he was old enough he even accompanied his father and some of the older men on short hunts near at hand. This was vastly exciting; but, it must be confessed, not too often productive. Across certain well-known narrow gaps in the hills sticks were bound together tripod-wise. Beneath each tripod squatted a hunter armed with bow and spear. He was in plain sight but he sat still as an image, and the beasts when driven did not appear to notice him. Possibly the tripod of sticks effectively blurred the outline. Others, the youngest and most active, tried to herd the game past the blinds. The animals were wild from much driving, and only rarely did they pass near enough to receive one of the deadly little poisoned arrows. But when a kongoni or a zebra or even, happy day, a wildebeeste was downed, what a celebration!

No matter what the occupation of the day, the setting sun witnessed veldt and forest vacated by all its human inhabitants and their possessions. Man's dominion in Africa ends with the daylight; and the lion, the lord of the darker hours, comes into his own. Little Toto used to creep to the gate of the *boma* and listen. First there were the deep coughing grunts, here, there, near, far, as the beasts greeted one another across the spaces. Then some mighty old male, hungry but scornfully careless, would roar. The deep, vibrating tones filled all the cup of heaven. And when the last rumbling had died silence held the world. No zebra barked, no buck snorted, no hyena laughed, no bird cried. All the veldt seemed to be holding its mighty breath, awaiting the pleasure of its lord. And little Toto, trembling, crept back to the hut.

III

WHEN Toto had reached the age of ten, and had added a necklet of leather sewn with blue and white beads to his other possessions, an excitement reached the camp. Over the blue hills

to the west a white man was approaching! News of him came to the village mysteriously between sun-down and sun-up, a time when no human is abroad. Neither did any stranger arrive. Yet before the gates were thrown open for the cattle all knew of this white man, and what he looked like, and with how many men he travelled. How the news arrived is one of the mysteries of Africa. The village was a-hum with it; and Toto and his companions lingered and procrastinated and delayed in order to hear more until old Shimbo, the witch-doctor, laid to them with his staff. There were no games that day. The boys squatted in a compact little group and talked.

They had all heard of white men, but none of them had ever seen one. This was in the days when white men were very few. The boys were secretly a little afraid; outwardly, of course, very boastful. They all bragged of what they would do were they elders and were a white man to enter their country; and they dismissed with airy nonchalance the stories of the white man's wonders—the striking of fire, the gun, the tents and chairs and everyday miracles that, garbled and

distorted in transmission through many tongues, reached this hilltop in strange and awesome guises. The more they chattered, the more excited they became. Only Maongo maintained his imperturbable, calm silence. And Toto, being by nature excitable, looked up to him the more on that account, and admired his coolness and courage.

The cattle were driven from the hills earlier than usual that evening. Nobody objected, for the people were in a tumult. This little village, it must be explained, lay near the edge of the higher hills to the eastward. From that direction came neither travel nor war. It was a backwater. Now, suddenly, it was called upon to take its part in the world's affairs.

Old Shimbo, the witch-doctor, was very busy and very mysterious. He had on his headdress and mask with the wildebeeste horns; and the feathered armlets and anklets; and the string of bells that reached from his waist to his knees; and he had painted in white on his naked body a picture of his skeleton, death size, and was altogether an awful and inspiring object. Before

a little queer-smelling fire he was laying out certain sacred but undetermined objects and substances, muttering darkly to himself. From the forest came long files of women, bent double, carrying on their backs by means of straps passing across the tops of their heads, great loads of firewood. This they deposited in the centre of the village. And before all the huts the girls and younger women were sorting and polishing various articles of clothing, jewellery, bead work, and other ornament. A row of drums, big as barrels, stood the other side of the growing pile of fuel.

Toto and his companions hastily impounded the cattle and raced to the big tree beneath which squatted every able-bodied man left in the village. His father was not there; and soon Toto learned that he, with others, had taken his spear, a section of sugar cane, and a gourdful of mixed blood and milk, and had gone forth to hover on the flanks of the white man's safari. From the conversation of those who remained he learned a number of things: that the white man was a very formidable and fearsome creature; that the warriors of the village would do their duty at all costs.

An impartial person would have detected more than a slight nervousness beneath this loudly expressed determination; and if he were particularly intelligent he would have foreboded trouble were that nervousness allowed to explode into action! There is danger in any situation that no one quite knows how to handle.

For the duty of this village was very simple. It was the law that through the lands of these people no man could pass without permission from the paramount chief, Leyeye. This permission was to be obtained by the payment of a tribute called the *hongga*. A high official of Leyeye's court met all strangers at the frontier. He planted his long spear upright in the ground. The traveller then threw over it coils of copper or iron wire. His treatment depended on how far up the spear the coils of wire extended. Very wealthy travellers had even been known to bury the spear completely. They were then permitted to go where they wished and to spend as long a time as they pleased. But such munificence was rare and not to be expected. And now for the first time this little village happened to be on the

frontier. Its men must stop this white man and hold him until Leyeye's envoys arrived. They had never had any experience; and they had no idea how it was to be done. Suppose the white man refused to stop?

At dusk the fire was lighted. The drums began to roar. Shimbo, looking like a terrible devil with horns, capered around and around the blaze, throwing various queer-smelling, quick-burning substances on the flames. The women wailed shrill chants that swelled and died down and swelled again, following the throbbing of the drums. The men dressed in their utmost magnificence, looking fiercely imposing under their black ostrich plumes, shook their weapons and swayed in unison.

All that night the *n'goma* lasted. It increased its intensity; it became toward the close an orgy of movement, of rhythmic emotion that at times suddenly broke in shrieking, foaming hysteria. And old Shimbo cast his spells, and at the dawn they all crept to their huts completely exhausted. But in some way it was felt that considerable had been done about it.

That very day the white man arrived. He marched over the hills at the head of some thirty men; proceeded in a business-like fashion to the bottom land near the stream; looked about for a few moments, and then, standing upright in the centre, began to give orders. In his hand he held a slender whip of rhinoceros hide with which he pointed, now here, now there. And at his bidding his men scampered about doing things in a marvellous and unheard-of manner.

Toto and his adored Maongo and all the other boys of their age were standing about watching, you may be sure. For what purpose were the younger boys created save to take over the job when their elders wished to view wonders? A disconsolate band of the smaller fry—some with fresh bruises on their top-knots—watched the cattle.

Nothing escaped the keen eyes of the older boys. The white man was satisfactorily big, and wore a bushy black beard which among people comparatively beardless was distinction enough. But it must be remembered that even the smallest, pettiest, most trivial detail—buttons and button-

holes, belt buckles, the cut of clothes, the hat, hob-nails, a half hundred such trifles—were not only brand new and strange, but the use and meaning of them must often be guessed at. Toto and his friends stood like little straight bronze statues; their elders squatted about at a little distance, motionless; but a hundred pair of eyes brimmed with quick curiosity and observation.

Things moved in that camp with incredible swiftness. A double tent went up, chop-boxes were piled to make a sort of table, a tin box was deposited and unlocked, a light folding chair was placed. The white man sat down in this and filled a pipe. Then occurred the first miracle. The white man produced a tiny sliver of wood no bigger than a twig. He touched it carelessly to the underside of the thing in which he sat, and instantly it burst into flame!

This was too much. The carefully preserved equilibrium tottered. A simultaneous cry of amazement broke from all in sight.

With this definite transcending of the laws of nature the white man entered once and for all the ranks of a different species possessed of extra-

human powers. Anything in the miracle line he might in the future perform would perhaps terrify, and certainly interest, but would not astonish. Why should it? When a man proves himself superior to one immutable natural law, what is to prevent his being superior also to the others? If he can make fire with a twig—which is of course impossible—why should he not fly or talk over a wire or jump over the moon or do any other thing that may please his fancy?

This white man was not a reassuring individual. He never so much as glanced toward any of his numerous audience. His own affairs he carried on briefly with a small, lively, black man whose face was wrinkled. After a few minutes this little man, whom Toto heard named as Cazi Moto, brought food and served it, which was another most absorbing thing to watch. Toto's imagination cooled in contemplation of what he would do toward detaining this awesome individual should the latter not care to be detained. Realizing to the full his hopeless inferiority in such matters as diplomatic negotiation and miracles, he could think of nothing save to get together as

big a crowd as possible, and all together to rush in and kill. Which was precisely the reasoning that was passing through the minds of his elders.

By now the more important of the latter were beginning officially to appear. For a time they had squatted with the common herd, satisfying their curiosity, but soon they had retired to the village in search of grandeur. They came by twos and little groups, and they were very wonderful to look upon, what with the encircling ostrich plumes and their polished wire and bead jewellery, and their long bright spears, and their lozenge-shaped painted hide shields. Silently they gathered closer and closer until they stood in an unbroken semicircle ten feet distant. The white man seemed unaware of their existence, and continued to cut his food. The warriors shifted from one foot to another, a good deal, it must be confessed, like waiting schoolboys. Finally young Sabuk, the biggest dandy and the most self assured, grinned and ventured a bashful greeting:

"Jambo, bwana."

The white man leisurely lifted a hard, aggressive

stare to Sabuk's face. After several tense and—to Sabuk—agonizing seconds, he called:

“Cazi Moto!”

The little black man hurried up. The white man pointed to Sabuk with his whip.

“Is this the *n'ympara*? ”* he asked in Swahili.

A chorus answered him in the negative. The traveller, paying no attention to these volunteer replies, waited for Cazi Moto.

“Tell this man who has spoken that I wish to see the *n'ympara* immediately,” he commanded, and at once became totally oblivious of all human insects. After a few moments he entered his tent and the flaps fell behind him.

The boys—and their elders—remained staring after him. Here, thought Toto, was a great lord.

After a few moments they trailed away to where Cazi Moto squatted before a tiny fire. Here was no aloofness and no apparent reticence. In five minutes they were all jabbering and chattering and shrieking native fashion.

* The form of this question in itself indicated the traveller's knowledge of his subject. *N'ympara* means headman. If the white man had desired to convey a compliment or sense of importance, he would have inquired for the *Sultani*, which means king.

The white man, Cazi Moto informed them, was the greatest white man in the world. He was the son, or at least near relative, of the King of the *Inglishi* and of the sun, moon, and stars. He was so strong that with one hand he could lift a buffalo from the ground, and was so great a lord that never in any circumstances did he have to use his strength. With sublime disregard for the smallness of his retinue and the comparative poverty of his equipment, Cazi Moto went on to describe his immense wealth "as the leaves of the grass!" He fought the elephant for its ivory and his path was marked with bones of lions. With Cazi Moto's efficient aid he had come a long journey, very long, from another country where was water to the edge of the world and no land to be seen, like the water of Naivasha, but no farther shore.

"And why," asked one of his listeners politely, "does not the water spill over the edge and run away, as it is the custom of water to do?"

"That is part of the white man's magic," said Cazi Moto boldly, and went on in conclusion to say that his master was named Kingozi, that is to

say the Bearded One, and that never, in any circumstances, did he miss a shot with his gun.

"We have never seen a gun," said the native spokesman respectfully. "Is it true that it makes a noise like the thunder, and kills at a distance like the lightning?"

"Make my Lord angry, and you shall see!" replied Cazi Moto darkly.

At this moment old Shimbo, having cast aside his rôle of witch-doctor and assumed that of headman, came up. Cazi Moto scratched on the canvas of his master's tent and the white man came out.

"Ah, *n'ympara jambo*," he greeted, and the dignitaries shook hands.

IV

TO EVERYBODY'S relief it developed that the white man had no intention of moving on, at least for several days. Few natives look beyond the immediate present, so that was good enough. Relations were begun between the members of the village and the carriers. Shimbo gave orders that firewood and *m'weinbe* meal be brought in.

M'Kuni, discovering his son and heir in the ranks of onlookers, clouted him over the head and sent him scurrying back to his neglected duties.

On the hilltop with the cattle, Toto was immensely surprised to discover that Maongo was far from sharing his thrills over this new demi-god. It was not that the older boy said much in disparagement as that he failed to respond to or take much interest in his friend's dithyrambs. Toto's explanations dashed against a stolidity that flattened them. After a half hour he began to doubt the value of his own impressions. By sheer inertia Maongo had regained his threatened superiority with his small companion.

Three days went by. The white man's camp remained. Twice he went out on the veldt and shot beasts, some of which he retained for himself, and others he presented to the village. Toto, chained to duty, was unable to accompany these expeditions, but he heard fully-embellished tales of how the gun spoke with a roaring voice like a god, and how without an instant's pause the beast fell; and he himself saw the carcasses and examined the holes from which life had escaped. The

instant, however, the cattle had been safely impounded, he and his friends raced to the camp by the river where they hung around like small boys at a circus until ordered out. And before the three days were up, so adaptable is the human mind, they had become quite accustomed to the white man, as though they had always had him with them. To members of neighbouring but distant villages they would probably have acted quite *blasé* concerning the white man.

On the third day came the officials from Leyeye. These were magnificent men, haughty, proud, inaccessible, with robes of bead-embroidered goat skins, much jewellery, their heads shaved in fantastic patterns. Each man was accompanied by slaves carrying such things as small hewn wooden stools on thongs, or snuff boxes made of buffalo horns, or *kiboko* whips. They and their retinue at once occupied the great houses in the middle of the village.

That very night they and the white man held a council.

From any but a native point of view the talk was long, purposeless, and without result. Yet in

some manner several bits of information came to light. The white man, Kingozi, developed unsuspected powers of entertainment. He could swallow a small object, or toss it into the air, and then pluck it from the strangest places, such as a man's ear or the edge of his robe. He possessed a queer double instrument of opposed blades with which he cut folded paper in such a manner that when unfolded one had a whole row of little people ahold of hands. And many other examples of magic. But none was more wonderful than the making of fire with the twig. Therefore, these things made rather for interest than for added prestige. And next day Kingozi shot a wildebeeste and gave the tail to Leyeye's prime minister, and for hours all hands sat under a tree and talked, so that everything seemed to be going well. Nevertheless, affairs were edging into an impasse. It appeared that this white man had come right across Africa from the Atlantic Ocean; that such a journey was long and terrible and expensive, not to speak of the fact that transportation was limited; that while his wealth was "as the leaves of the grass," he had not much of it with him. In

short, that the payment of *hongā* was at present absolutely out of the question. The suggestion was strongly urged, however, that as a fighter of elephants he was in a class by himself; and that within a very brief period he would be able—in short, a bid for credit. The envoys had nothing direct to say to this. Everybody was very polite and vague. But a situation was taking shape, and would shortly assume solidity. On the one hand, no *hongā* no travel; on the other, I will go where I please.

V

Toro, along with the rest of the village, was awakened by a plunging and bawling just outside. The usually mild cattle were rushing to and fro madly, jostling each other and the frail walls of the hut. Beneath the din of their voices was another, a low, rumbling, bloodcurdling growl. Everybody rushed forth, the men snatching their weapons, the women grasping armfuls of the dry thatch. These latter cast on the smouldering fires blazed up at once, throwing the immediate surroundings into strong light. The cattle were

tossing their heads, their eyes white with terror. Two or three of the flimsy interior fences had given way to the pressure and the herds were surging out into the open common, trampling the embers of the conical fires and crashing through all that stood in their way.

The people were rushing toward a single point near the great gate. Several had snatched brands which they were waving about, trying to coax them into flame. Some of the women were carrying bundles of blazing grass and screaming. There seemed to be a narrow, irregular gap in the walls of the thorn *boma*, and through this everybody, screeching and yelling, was trying to crowd. All were shouting the same over and over—*simba! simba! simba!*—which is the Swahili for lion.

Toto was small, so he managed to get through the gap only after most of the others had passed.

The light outside, cast by the impromptu torches, was dim and flickering. Toto saw dancing shadows, and the immense darkness of the night that darted forward and back, and the flash of many poised spears and the whites of many eyeballs and the gleam of teeth in the mouths of

men shouting. And beyond he saw a magnificent great beast standing one paw on a dead cow that it had carried bodily thus far, its ears back, its mane erect, its long teeth exposed, eyeing its hesitating enemies with haughty scorn. Each breath growled in its throat. Then realizing itself closely pressed, it withdrew its massive paw. Abruptly it was gone.

VI

THIS excitement lasted the village all night. The fires were built up strongly so that the place was as light as day. Women mended the *boma* and the inside corrals, and drove back the cattle to their proper places. Everybody talked at great length and from each individual standpoint. In the morning Leyeye's envoys and the leading men of the village went over to see the white man about it. They suggested two things: medicine to bring the defunct cow to life, and magic to prevent repetition. Kingozi proposed that, as a compromise, they try to hunt down and kill the offender.

Accordingly they took the field. Kingozi went

first, carrying a gun; Cazi Moto at his heels bore another. The envoys from Leyeye armed with spears and a miscellaneous few of the bolder villagers acted as scouts and beaters. A mosquito fleet of small boys constituted a sort of covering and flanking party. Kingozi tried in vain to modify this arrangement, but failing he shrugged his shoulders philosophically.

"This is, of course, *shenzi* foolishness," he remarked to his familiar, Cazi Moto, "*simba* will hear us and will walk away. For as you know, Cazi Moto, *simba* is no fool."

Nevertheless, for the sake of good feeling and to show intention Kingozi proceeded for a while although perfunctorily, as though he expected to find the lion.

Of this country the open grass veldt was marked in the bottoms by narrow, bush-grown, eroded ravines from six to ten feet deep called *dongas*. The hunting party proceeded down one of these and up another, trying systematically to cover all possibilities. Some walked on one side and some on the other. All threw stones and beat with sticks. Kingozi knew that, while this method

might be good in isolated patches of cover, it was worthless here. The lion would quietly sneak down the bed of the *donga* ahead of this clatter.

But it was fun for all that. Kingozi, who was very young in spite of his beard, enjoyed himself hugely. The showers of stones flushed all sorts of interesting things. One never knew what was coming next. Now a tiny grass antelope dashed frantically from cover, or a bustard flopped up, or a string of guinea fowl soared away, or perhaps a band of baboons withdrew cursing. Mile after mile they went thus.

"Here," said Kingozi to Cazi Moto, "is water everywhere and cover. This is not like a country of rocky hills where there are only a few places to look. Here *simba* can drink anywhere he pleases. One might as well seek virtue in an Arab."

But no sooner were the words out of his mouth when they were given the lie.

From a clump of grass atop a low anthill, not thirty yards distant, a lion thrust his head and stared at them steadily.

Everybody stopped short in his tracks. Quite deliberately Kingozi raised his weapon, took care-

ful aim, and fired. With a strangled grunt the beast fell backward off the anthill and his tail flew up in the manner of lions when fatally hit. For a moment no one moved: then with a wild yell every man and boy charged down on the fallen marauder.

"Stop! stop!" shrieked Kingozi at the top of his lungs, but was unable to make himself heard. Swearing vigorously in English he exchanged guns with Cazi Moto and also ran forward.

However, the lion proved really dead, for a wonder. It was a medium-sized beast with an excellent mane. Cazi Moto, laying aside his rifle, began at once to skin it.

After the first excitement and interest had passed away many of the assistants scattered. Some of the men and small boys began to try for small bucks with their throwing sticks. Others sought wild fruit. The two chief envoys from Leyeye walked deep in conversation farther along the edge of the *donga*. Toto and Maongo, with their little spears, tagged along wide-eyed and worshipping of such grandeur.

Now all this was foolishness. A lion is never

dead until you pull his tail; and in Africa danger is never absent while you are afoot. This lion had a mate; and many attested incidents and accidents prove that when bereaved *felis leo* cherishes rancor. Toto heard a scrambling, a snarling growl. He whirled to see a lioness top the edge of the *donga* just behind him.

Toto's instinct—a perfectly proper one—was to use his legs. He uttered a howl and started to make off. In the flash of his turning he caught a glimpse of his friend—and hero—Maongo. Maongo was not running away. He was facing in the direction of the lioness, his little spear grasped in his hand. He alone—with Toto—stood between the ravening beast and the sacred persons of the envoys. It was exactly like the high-flown tales Toto had heard told around the campfires—tales of heroes and demi-gods of the fabled past. Only this was here and now: and Maongo was taking the shining rôle! Filled with a sudden tide of generous feeling, Toto commanded his cowardly legs. He raised his spear as though to throw and stepped forward two paces, a slender, ridiculous, tiny bronze figure against the great beast.

And Maongo, whom the gods had stricken with the imbecile paralysis of terror probably for this very purpose, suddenly regained his faculties, dropped his spearlet, and departed rapidly, uttering shrieks.

Whether Toto would have followed him or not it is impossible to say. Toto was no hero; only a hero worshipper who had been foully betrayed into a great moment. But he had no time to move. The lioness swept over and by him. Probably she considered herself after larger game, and could not bother with small fry. At any rate, Toto thrust valiantly with his tiny spear, and was knocked aside badly scared, out of wind, but uninjured.

Then many things happened. The envoys squealed and tried to run. Kingozi swore, grabbed his rifle, and shot hastily. Some of the villagers took to thorn trees, some dived incontinently into the *donga*, while still others stood frozen in their tracks. All yelled.

Kingozi's snap shot took the lioness too far back to stop her; but fortunately slowed her down. Otherwise her superiority in speed would very promptly have rewarded her with one

scared old gentleman. As it was, she could go just about a good fast human gait. And as the scared old gentleman elected to run in circles instead of on a straightaway, the whole action of the piece took place in a constricted area. It was undoubtedly somewhat comic—the complete breakdown of dignity, the flapping goat-skin robes, the important ambassador suddenly become quite simply an agonized embodiment of abject terror; and the crippled lioness trying with an earnest singleness of purpose to catch up, and the chase turning around and around on itself like a Sunday-supplement drawing of a bulldog after a tramp. However, the situation was serious enough. One blow of that huge paw would be sufficient.

Kingozi, still swearing vigorously, shouting unheard commands to run in a straight line, was trying in vain to deliver a safe shot.

The old man would not listen, he persisted in running in circles, he could not separate himself far enough from the beast to get out of bullet danger. The lioness was gaining, and the representative of Leyeye was doing his utmost. Even the hot breath of the beast failed to develop

in him another second of speed. Finally Kingozi, still cursing, was forced to shoot anyhow. And by the greatest good fortune the bullet missed the man and broke the beast's neck.

"Of all astounding bull luck!" quoth Kingozi in English, wiping his brow.

VII

THE excitement settled, as dust settles in still air. Those who had climbed the thorn trees descended with many lamentations; those who had dived into the *donga* reappeared; those who had been frozen thawed out into vociferations. The envoys gradually regained their dignity. Considerable language was used.

Kingozi paid no attention to any of this. He had fallen back into his usual rather cynical aloofness. With Cazi Moto he exchanged a few low-voiced comments; then the two of them went to the dead lioness and Cazi Moto began to skin her. Kingozi watched him. A dozen times he was addressed by one or another of the excited and triumphant bystanders, but was apparently so lost in a brown study that he did not even hear

them. When the skin was at last removed and drawn one side he shook himself and seemed to rouse.

"Come here," he said to the envoy.

When the old man had approached Kingozi took from his hand the long, heavy spear and with a strong thrust stuck it upright in the ground.

"You have asked of me *hong*a," he said, "and if I possessed wire I would gladly bury that spear in coils. But I have told you I have no wire. Nevertheless, the time has come to pay. Here now, according to custom, over the spear I throw my *hong*a."

He stooped swiftly, gathered the green hide of the lioness in his two hands, and with a powerful effort impaled it on the spear point. The soft folds fell about the shaft, completely covering it.

"Is it sufficient?" he challenged.

The old man raised his hands that still trembled.

"It is sufficient, *bwana*, and more!" he replied.

Kingozi broke into a great laugh and looked around him.

"Where is the boy?" he enquired. "The boy who stood in the way?"

Several shoved forward Toto; and Maongo, his nerve by now quite recovered, stepped up of his own accord. For some seconds Kingozi stared at the two of them in silence. Then he gave Maongo a box in the side of the head that sent him reeling.

"How is it that a coward dares stand before me?" he said, without heat. "Begone!" He unsheathed his hunting knife and cut from the carcass of the lioness a piece of the body fat. With this he solemnly rubbed Toto's forehead.

"The lion, *simba*, is bravest among beasts," said he. "Remember that this magic will make it possible for you to be the bravest among your companions." He grinned under his beard as he contemplated the serious, erect little figure. "And that wouldn't be saying much," he remarked, but in English. "What is your name?" he asked.

Toto stood very straight, clasping his tiny spear and staring at the white man. His little soul was so full of splendour and glory and high emotion that he would have cried had he tried to speak; and greatly Toto desired not to cry. And in truth he hardly heard the question. Kingozi repeated it. A half-dozen bystanders attempted

to volunteer the information; but the white man held up his hand.

“Answer!” he commanded.

And Toto, his adoration of his new hero shining from his eyes, found his voice at last. His shoulders went back and his head up.

“My name is *Simba!*” he said.

CHAPTER II

WHITE MAGIC

OLD SHIMBO, the witch-doctor, was full of business these days. Affairs had piled up on him: and as Shimbo was by now an aged man with the irascibility of one long in unopposed authority, he considered that he was having a hard time of it.

Outside the routine duties peculiar to his job, Shimbo was confronted by two other weighty affairs. A four-year period had passed, and now another batch of youths was awaiting the elaborate initiation ceremonies that should turn them out as full-fledged warriors; the white man's hard-fought war with the Wakamba was coming to an end and the mighty people of whom Shimbo was one lay next in the conqueror's path. These things must be attended to.

Old Shimbo dwelt in a little hut just within the village enclosure. His wives he kept next door in

a larger hut, together with the considerable wealth he had accumulated. No one was ever allowed to enter the little hut. It was a queer kennel, hung with such matters as bits of skin, gourds filled with miscellaneous magic, iron bells on the ends of thongs, bones, dried herbs in packets. A couch of skins occupied one corner.

From this Shimbo stirred his creaking bones only after the sun was well up. Then he huddled at his doorstep before a tiny fire over which bubbled a mysterious pot. One of his hags brought him food. The cattle had long since moved out from the village to the hills; and the people were busy with their accustomed routine. Shimbo muttered darkly to himself.

To him came rather timidly a bright-faced young native, his arm around the waist of an attractive young woman. They stood waiting bashfully.

"O Shimbo!" greeted the young man timidly.

"What is it?" grunted Shimbo.

The young man explained. He was owner of a new *shamba*, or little farm, just beyond the village. His crops were ripening. Thieves were stealing the crops—

Shimbo waved his skinny hand.

"I have no time for such little things," he croaked.

The young man became urgent. He was newly married. These crops were all his wealth except—he would pay—— He drew from beneath his goat-skin robe an ornamented snuff-horn which he offered. Shimbo snatched it, looked it over, thrust it beneath his own robe, and silently reached out his skinny hand. The consultant sighed and slowly produced a bead armlet. Shimbo examined this also. Apparently satisfied, he made a long arm into his hut and dragged from it a leopard skin, which he spread before him. On this he proceeded to spill one by one various seeds and pebbles from a gourd, first shaking them as one shakes dice. As each fell on the spotted skin he examined it closely but without comment other than an occasional non-committal grunt. When the last pebble had fallen he sat for some time in silence. Then, gathering up the leopard skin, he disappeared into his hut. Emerging thence he passed swiftly, for one so old, to the council tree. There a few words to the loungers

conveyed his wishes. The whole masculine and a considerable of the feminine portions of the village followed him through the gates into the open fields.

Arrived at the farm in question he halted the spectators at the boundaries, while he himself, bent nearly double, traversed the field from end to end. Every ten feet or so he cast unguessable small objects on the ground, muttering strange gibberish over each. The people looked with awe. When Shimbo ended by thrusting stones and bundles of grass in tree crotches, they were not deceived. These were but blinds: the really potent magic was on the ground

Then the procession returned to the village. Shimbo hobbling, and muttering, a little in advance. There was no need for words. The crops were safe from theft, for every human being knew that the effect of Shimbo's magic was to bring on anyone who touched it at night a sort of madness so that he would cry out loudly and so be caught. Shimbo sank back to his place in the sun with a groan. This was hard work.

But he was not left long in peace. A strongly

built middle-aged man with an evil face planted his spear and sat close to whisper his desires. He had an enemy, in another village—he went on at length detailing his grievances and the harm he had suffered——

Shimbo cut him short. This was serious business, the business of a *muoiin* who deals in black magic; not of a mere *mundu mue* who knows only white magic. It must be paid. Ensued bargaining at the satisfactory conclusion of which Shimbo went into executive session with himself.

“Your enemy has come to visit this village to-day?” he demanded.

“Of course, *O Muoiin*,” said the man. “That I knew to be necessary.”

For the second time Shimbo arose and followed his client to a sandy spot outside the village. The man led him to a little pile of leafy boughs laid on the ground. These being removed, disclosed the print of a foot. Shimbo spat carefully in this print, took up the wetted sand and wrapped it in a bit of skin.

“Now the hyena,” he commanded. “Is it far?”

"Very near, *O Muoiin*," replied the man respectfully.

He guided Shimbo to the edge of a thicket where lay the body of a hyena freshly poisoned for this very purpose. Shimbo fumbled in his robe, drew forth a tiny ceremonial knife, muttered a charm, and then proceeded to cut off the beast's nose. Thereupon, followed by his client, he returned to his office.

His next procedure was to empty his kettle and replenish it with a small quantity of fresh, but magic, water from a gourd. Into this he put the sand from the footprint, the hyena's nose, the dung of an ox, and a dozen sorts of dried herbs. Muttering spells, he stirred this mixture until the water had boiled away. The residue he wrapped in a leaf which the client accepted. When the magic had quite dried to a powder, he would blow it from the palm of his hand toward his enemy. The enemy was thereupon done for. Doubt? None whatever. Shimbo knew that the chances of something happening to that enemy were pretty strong. And if the common accidents of life passed by, nevertheless that victim was

sure to be informed that magic was out against him. Such is the power of mind over body among savages that he would quite likely give up and die anyway. His alternative was to get an antidote of Shimbo at a price. And if anything went wrong. Shimbo had at least five pre-arranged counter-accusations as to faulty procedure by the man who used the magic. As black magic comes high, and Shimbo's motto was "cash in advance," he felt well satisfied with the transaction.

All this took time. By now a dozen clients were waiting. Their requests were of every degree of importance. Thus one man from an outlying settlement wished to obtain from Shimbo the power of curing the bite of poisonous snakes. Since this constituted delegated authority, Shimbo insisted on a good fat fee; and in addition a royalty on cures, although lacking the civilized convenience of auditors, Shimbo knew that his chances of accurate accounting were slim. The witch doctor then proceeded to slit the end of the applicant's tongue, and to rub into the cut certain powders. Thereafter whenever this gifted person spat upon a snake, that serpent would immediately

go into convulsions, writhe about, and bite itself to death. And if he were to spit upon a snake bitten person, that person would immediately get well.

Besides those important professional matters there were many people desiring charms for one purpose or another; and advice on the more ticklish occult aspects of everyday life. Shimbo was a very rushed, harried, important, fussy, and somewhat cross old gentleman. As soon as each client was disposed of he walked out the rear of the little enclosure to find himself before the larger huts in which dwelt Shimbo's wives. These estimable old ladies, basking in the sun, were only too ready for a gossip. They were very voluble, mainly about the important and busy life led by their distinguished husband. A very free translation of their remarks would perhaps sound familiar.

"You have no idea, my dear, of the demands on that poor man! I give you my word he never knows whether he's eaten or not; and I often say to Mary that if he doesn't take a rest before long, he'll suffer a complete breakdown. But he feels that he should not consider himself. He feels it a public duty. I don't know what this com-

munity would do without him. I think we should all feel deeply grateful that we have a man of his gifts with us, and that he is willing to devote himself to our welfare. But he is overdoing."

II

THIS lively and well-paid traffic suffered an interruption about three o'clock in the afternoon. A half-dozen grave savages filed into the compound and squatted before the witch-doctor. One of them carried a richly ornamented stool on the end of a thong, which was an indication of rank. In fact, he was Mukeku, headman of the village. His companions were also men of consequence, among them M'Kuni, the father of Simba. Shimbo glanced up at them half malevolently, made no greeting, and continued to mutter spells over his little fire.

"O *Muoiin*," said Mukeku, after formal greeting. "Our young men are prepared and waiting. They have been ready for some days. The *mazungu* (white men) approach with their warriors. It is necessary that all our warriors should be ready. We have come to know the day.

Here at hand are all things necessary. The small huts of ceremony are built; the great hut of ceremony, the *nzaiko*, is built. The headdresses of bird skins are prepared. The youth have gone painted the right number of days. At hand are cattle, goats, honey, for the feast. All is ready. Nothing lacks but yourself, O *Muoiin*. Name the time."

Shimbo muttered and stirred the fire without for the present making any direct reply. He was none too-well-pleased. This was public duty—unpaid. He knew his power: he could quite well send these people away. They stood in awe of him. But eventually the job must be done. He spread out ashes, made mysterious patterns with the end of a stick, pretended to consult them.

"The omens are right for two days hence," he croaked ungraciously, and buried his nose in his robe.

III

AMONG the youths ready for the initiation ceremonies was Simba, son of M'Kuni, a young man of perhaps eighteen years. His preparation had

begun two weeks previously. In company with his fellow candidates he had haunted the stream beds, the *dongas*, the bits of forest, where small birds were most abundant. At these he had shot painstakingly with blunt-headed arrows until he had accumulated enough of the skins to make himself a headdress. They were skinned cylindrically, and hung to a fillet, so that they dangled about his neck with very much the appearance of old-fashioned corkscrew curls. Then he assumed a plain, unornamented black robe of goat skins, and stalked mysteriously about in the brush outside the village compound, religiously observing innumerable prohibitions and inhibitions, eschewing ostentatiously all his fellow beings, and feeling for the first time in his life of decided importance. He slept in a hut set apart for the candidates, and he ate only certain prescribed food of limited quantity.

This, as has been said, had been going on for two weeks. All had been ready for the last ten days. Simba and his companions were getting decidedly overtrained.

True to his promise, however, old Shimbo,

dressed and painted as devilishly as his vivid imagination and long experience would allow, came for the initiates on the morning agreed. In his hand he held a number of miniature bows and arrows, mere children's toys, which he distributed. Then, bent over and slightly crow-hopping, he led his hopefuls down to the dry stream bed below the village. Here the sun was at its hottest and the rocks, radiating like furnaces, were aswarm with reptile life. Simba tried again and again with the awkward, silly little weapon, but at length succeeded in transfixing his quarry, a specimen of that peculiar lizard called *telembo* by his people. With this impaled on the slender tiny arrow, he joined the group around old Shimbo. When every candidate had his lizard, the procession returned to the village, each holding his arrow aloft. They marched in single file, very solemn, and the people stood by and clapped their hands in rhythm. As they approached the *nzaiko* hut they showed the lizards to the elders, assembled in a group, then threw them with the arrows on the thatched roof and passed within. Shimbo stood in the doorway, an awesome figure.

"By the magic of this day," he announced in a solemn voice, "always shall you shoot straight at your game and at your enemies."

With that he left them and scuttled back to his private practice, which he felt had been sadly interrupted. Simba and his friends sat in the semi-darkness of the hut in a silence that lasted all day and all night.

The following morning Shimbo reappeared and led them again outside the village walls. On a side hill a half mile distant a small herd of cattle could be discovered guarded by a dozen men. Toward these the candidates made their way, worming from one bit of corn to the other, trying by every savage device to remain invisible. When within fifty or eighty yards one of the Elders, stationed on a rock, pretended for the first time to become aware of their approach.

"Look out! The Masai attack!" he cried.

Immediately the youths leaped to their feet, hurling clouds of earth at the herdsmen, running here and there, trying to surround the cattle. The herdsmen replied with missiles of solanum fruit collected in heaps for the occasion. As the

attacking party were strictly limited to the aforesaid clods, it will be seen that the weight of artillery was with the defence. In fact, a solanum fruit would not yield much in effectiveness to a baseball. The embryo warriors were well pelted. Simba caught one in the side of the head that nearly knocked him out and raised a bump as big as itself. Another shrewdly aimed took him in the 'ribs. A third numbed his arm. Nevertheless, he gave no sign of pain, but pressed on shouting, for he knew that the group of old men there yonder were watching closely.

Indeed, after the attack was finished and the candidates, panting from their exertions and considerably the worse for wear, stood before them, old Shimbo, muttering and wagging his head, danced forward and touched Maongo on the shoulder.

"*Wea!*" he declared, and the Elders repeated after him, "*Wea!*"

By this word, which means "coward," they indicated that their sharp eyes had seen Maongo shrink, even ever so slightly, from one of the blows. And Maongo, almost weeping, was forced

to fall out from the ranks that straightway returned to the *nzaiko* hut. He had failed, and must either await another initiation time or—what was more likely—buy his way to a second chance.

After another afternoon and night of silence the third day found them in a row by the Council Tree, facing a grave concourse. Shimbo squatted in the foreground. Before him lay a number of sticks of a certain tree, perhaps three feet long and three inches in diameter. He called Simba out from the group to stand before him. With the point of his knife he rapidly cut certain conventional figures in the back of one of the sticks, a sort of riddle in picture writing as it were. He handed it to Simba. The boy examined it closely for some time in silence.

“The half circle is the rising sun,” he then said, “the crooked line is a path—or a great snake,” he added doubtfully, “and the other mark is an arrow.” He went on guessing at the significance of the hieroglyphic-like marks. All listened attentively. At the last Simba correlated his interpretations into a sort of simple message or

story. It came out pretty well, without too many marks left unexplained, and with a fair coherence of its own. Therefore Simba was considered to have passed this test, even though his ideas might not accurately follow Shimbo's intention.

Some of the others were not so lucky. But since brains are scarcer than courage, therefore here was greater leniency. The candidate who failed was not eliminated. Instead his father was ridiculed by all those present, and he was forced at once to pay a fine of ten shillings. He was once drunk by the elders, and he was to the stupid youth was in regulations.

So the day of the ceremony and its appropriate ceremony of the young men sat in the hut and said not one word to anybody. He did the rite of the *mumho* tree with the white cloth and the rite of the black goat with the red cloth. The rite of the *kula kilwa* with the white cloth and the *uthi* dances of the young people, and many others too numerous to mention. At the end came the grand *n'goma* in which the entire village took part; a dance that lasted all one night; an affair of great fires and

throbbing drums. When it was all over Simba and his comrades emerged full-fledged warriors, which meant that their front teeth had been chipped down to fine points, that they possessed grown-up war spears and gaudily painted hide shields, and that they were privileged to buy as many wives as they could afford. As for Shimbo, he was all in.

IV

WITHIN two days thereafter came messengers from Leyeye, the paramount chief of all the tribes. These were haughty and arrogant creatures who would have nothing to do with any but the village heads. The purport of their communication was soon known, however. The white men, having subdued the Wakamba, were on the way. Leyeye was sending out a summons to all his warriors. The message was transmitted through Mukeku, the head man.

The inflammable African temperament caught fire. Instantly the orderly life of the village broke into ten thousand kaleidoscopic pieces. Men produced items of equipment and proceeded sedu-

lously to put them in order. Women bustled about packing provisions and the simple outfit. Children stood wide-eyed, ran on errands, shrieked when trodden on. Old Shimbo, on the verge of breakdown from overwork, made spells industriously, and cudgelled his imagination for new effects in personal adornment that would lay over anything any other witch-doctor might spring.

By dawn of the following day the battalion moved, sixty odd strong. It was a wonderful sight, what with the glitter of the spears, the shine of the oiled bronze bodies, the nod of black ostrich plumes, the magnificence of armlet, necklet, and belt, the ambers and blacks and whites of the oval shields, the gleam of eyeballs in fierce, grave countenances. For they knew of the white man's power and his guns that killed at a distance, like the thunder. The situation was serious. Every man and youth was perfectly aware of the chances against him. Nevertheless, he would charge blithely at command. It has become fashionable of late to speak of the "cowardly native." There are few people so tempered that, naked, armed only with spears, they would charge again and

again in spite of losses against protected rifle fire—as has the African. Each carried, besides his weapons, only a light covering, and a little dried food. Old Shimbo, remarkably spry for one so aged, marched ahead. He was painted in new and startling patterns, his face was a grinning mask, he was hung all over with charms, he carried a rattle that constantly he agitated, and he had mounted a pair of cow's horns on his forehead, which gave him a thrillingly devilish appearance.

Across the open veldt they took their way in single file. They walked down the long slope, across the bottom, up the long slope again, as over low, broad billows of the sea. The wild animals with which the plains swarmed hardly stepped aside to permit of their passing—the zebra, the gazelles, the brindled wildebeeste, the little grass antelope, and the hartebeeste. From the top of each billow they looked across the broad shallow cup to the top of another. Far in the distance, above the atmosphere of the heat haze, they could see the pearly snow crest of Kilimanjaro apparently floating detached in mid-air like a

soap bubble. Other mountains pierced over the edge of the world. A clean, strong wind was blowing; and the sun poured like a brimming flood; birds wheeled, uttering wild cries.

Thus they marched steadily for half a day, all alone in the world save for the beasts and birds. Then far to the left they saw black ant-like specks toiling up the slope. Their path and that of the strangers slowly converged. It became evident that this was another war party bound for the same destination as themselves. And to the right they saw more warriors, and beyond them a fourth band. As they proceeded these companions became more numerous, until toward sundown the veldt seemed full of them, all moving slowly toward a common centre, the point designated by the messengers of Leyeye.

The rendezvous was at the edge of the low plateau overlooking an immense plain. The women of the near-by villages had been busy for days erecting shelters of wattle daubed with mud. This, within a few hours, dried to the appearance of stone, lending a strange illusion of permanence to temporary habitations. Hundreds and

hundreds of these huts they had built, and cords of firewood collected—a tremendous physical labour. And now under the autocratic command of Leyeye long files of them were converging from all points bent double under loads of food. It was a notable gathering.

The company with which Simba marched arrived about dusk. The little fires were beginning to gleam, and the reflections shone red from a forest of spears planted upright in the ground.

V

TO CONFERENCE on the following day came Colonel Falkeyne, in command of the British Expedition, together with his staff, his escort, and his scouts. Among the latter was a man named Culbertson, on whose judgment and knowledge of the country and the peoples Colonel Falkeyne placed great reliance. When the little force came in sight of the immense encampment and the forest of spears twinkling in the sun, the officer whistled in half dismay.

“But this is an army, Culbertson!” he cried.
“I’d no idea they mustered so many!”

"They would muster a good many more than that, were they all here," replied Culbertson carelessly. "I told you this was a powerful people."

"Are they fighters?"

"Listen," said Culbertson, "some seven or eight years ago this particular section of the country was afflicted with a combination of drought and cattle disease. The situation was really serious. Famine and the resultant pestilence would in six months have carried off half the people. But these people would not wait for that. They gathered their warriors—much as they are gathered now—and divided them into two bands. They 'chose up' just as boys 'choose up' at a game. Then they went out to a flat plain below the Nairobi River. The women and the remaining cattle occupied an adjacent hill, swarms of them, like flies on a tent ridge. In the flat below the warriors faced each other in two long parallel lines. At a signal, given by Leyeye, they set to it with spear and shield. They fought desperately until Leyeye, who watched from a near-by knoll, gave them a signal to stop. Then they stopped

immediately. The survivors took the women and cattle. Thus the numbers were sufficiently reduced so that famine was averted."

"By Jove! that was sporting," cried the officer. "Are you certain it happened? Sounds like a native tale."

"I saw it," replied Culbertson simply. "It was exactly as I describe. I visited the place two years later. The bones were a good deal scattered by hyenas, of course, but I could see a rough double line marked by the white skulls."

"Didn't they care for the dead?"

"Not in this case. They pulled up and moved out, and have never been back since. But they'll fight!"

"Looks like a serious job," said Colonel Falkayne gravely. "Are we safe here with this little force?"

"Reasonably. I know a protected place for camp near water; and we must get hostages for good conduct. Old Leyeye and his Elders are all right, but there's a lot of inflammable material here."

Accordingly they pitched their camp on a high, narrow, rocky point extending out into the river.

About a third of the distance down the cliff a trickle of water oozed. The situation was ideal for defense as it could be approached only on a narrow front and from one side. Tents were erected, sentinels posted. The quiet little encampment was in marked contrast to the savage gathering of thousands over the way. There hundreds of fires gleamed, drums roared or beat in syncopated rhythm, silhouetted figures flashed back and forth before the blazes, shrill chants rose and died. The little group of officers smoking silently before the largest tent gazed across at this turmoil of activities rather anxiously. Between them and the distant fires the black figures of sentinels paced slowly back and forth.

The nearer stillness was broken by the moan of a hyena. After an interval it was twice repeated.

"Cheeky beggar!" commented one of the younger officers.

But Culbertson had raised his head and was listening. From the same quarter now came the quickly repeated call of the fever owl.

"Cazi Moto!" summoned Culbertson.

A small, black, wizened native dressed in ragged

garments glided to his side. With him Culbertson conversed for a moment in low tones. Then the native disappeared into the darkness. Culbertson lighted another pipe and settled himself to wait. After an interval Cazi Moto reappeared to whisper something in his master's ear. Culbertson nodded and arose.

"Colonel Falkeyne, may I have a word with you?" he requested.

He led the way to the cliff's edge beyond the camp. There in the darkness of a great rock the officer became aware of a mysterious figure standing.

The dim light of the campfires and the stars showed it to be a man of immense height. Colonel Falkeyne was himself but just under six feet, yet the stranger stood well above him. He was wrapped closely in a dark robe of tanned goat skins and apparently was denuded of all ornament. In his mien was a great dignity.

"This," said Culbertson in a guarded voice, "is Leyeye himself. He has come incognito for a private conference. It must not be known that he has been here."

"But the sentinels!" cried Falkeyne.

Culbertson said a few words in a strange language. The tall figure chuckled and unexpectedly spoke in Swahili.

"I came by your sentinel as one passes a blind man," he said, "and I shall depart in the same manner." He turned to Culbertson, "Kingozi, let us go where we can talk in peace."

Culbertson, or Kingozi to call him by his native name, considered.

"We cannot do better than my tent," he decided, "Cazi Moto shall hold all people at a distance."

The candle lantern in the tent disclosed the visitor as an old man, a fact that would never have been suspected from the erectness of his carriage. His face was seamed with many lines of craft and wisdom, deep carven lines, and his eyes were tired. He seated himself with dignity and threw aside his robe to reveal his bronze body with the loosened skin of the aged. When he spoke Falkeyne had again occasion to remark the husky rich timbre of his voice.

"It is not the custom of Leyeye to run about at

night," he began, "like a common slave. When he travels his spears are as the leaves of the grass about him; and when he pays visits the drums are as lions and the trumpets like the birds that wheel and cry."

"Leyeye is always a great *sultani*, whether he comes alone or attended," interjected Kingozi.

The old man listened attentively, then shifted his eyes to Colonel Falkeyne.

"It is believing that this man is also a great *sultani* that I have come to-night. I am glad I have come," he said. He half turned on his seat, and at once the interview became a dialogue between high potentates, with Kingozi only an interested spectator.

"My people are a mighty people," he said. "My young men are trained to war. Other nations raise crops of *m'wembe* and other things; other nations trade back and forth; other nations live by hunting game. That is well. But when they have harvested their *m'wembe* and made their trades and killed their game, then my young men come with their bright spears, and all these things are ours. We know but two

things: we keep herds, we make war." He turned back to Culbertson. "Do you, Kingozi my brother, tell him in your tongue that what I say is true."

"He refers to the strength of his military caste," said Culbertson in English. "It comprises practically every male between about eighteen and thirty. They have a certain knowledge of tactics and drill. There's no doubt they're more formidable than other nations."

"What do you suppose the old chap's driving at—swank?" asked the Colonel.

"I don't think so. Give him his head."

Leyeye, seeing that the short colloquy was over, resumed his talk.

"My people are afraid of nothing," he went on. "They hunt the lion and they kill him with spears. They are not afraid of war. They are not afraid to die. They are not afraid of you nor of your guns that kill like thunder." The old man's form had straightened and his eyes flashed. Receiving no comment on this challenge, he went on more calmly: "If I were to command them, they would walk up to your guns to be killed one by

one, and the last man of all would go as gladly as the first. Unless you understand this, it is useless to talk more."

"I know the courage of your people," said Falkeyne simply.

Leyeye stared him in the eyes for some moments.

"Since that is so," he resumed abruptly. "I can say freely what is in my heart. I have watched the war with the Wakamba. It was a good war. They killed many of your young men: and you killed many of theirs. The Wakamba fight well. But this one thing I have noticed in that war: when a Wakamba was killed he was dead; but when one of your young men was killed two more came to take his place. And therefore I say to you, as one *sultani* to another *sultani*, that if we make war we shall kill very many, more than even the Wakamba did, for we are a better nation than the Wakamba: but also you will kill my young men. Why should we fight? We desire pasture for cattle, wide plains on which to roam: you wish only a road. Does one of these desires stand in the way of the other? Why should not each have his wish?"

"But the man is a statesman!" cried Falkeyne to Culbertson.

At the end of another half hour Leyeye arose to depart.

"It is then understood. To-morrow you must rest. The next day we will hold *shauri*." He offered Falkeyne the native sign of friendship, first a grasp with the palm, then a grasp of the thumb.

"Cannot I give you escort?" offered Falkeyne.

Leyeye's austere countenance slightly relaxed.

"My people must never know of this visit," he said. "I must again pass your sentinel—and mine, which is more difficult." He said three words to Culbertson in the strange language, and the tent flaps fell behind him.

"Old chap wants a private conversation—with your permission," murmured Culbertson, and followed.

At the edge of the cliff he overtook the tall figure of Leyeye.

"My brother, Kingozi," said the latter, "my heart is glad that this *bwana* is a great leader and is willing to make peace without fighting. That

is best for all peoples. But now comes the difficult part. My young men are hot and eager for war. My mind is troubled to control them."

"You suspect that your command will not be sufficient?" asked Kingozi.

The old ruler drew himself up.

"My command would be sufficient, as always," he replied proudly. "There would be no war. But my young men's hearts will still be hot in their breasts. They will hover about, and one day they will kill white men, and then it will be war."

"What is your plan?" asked Kingozi.

"The witch-doctors of all the villages must give the omens for peace."

"Will they not do so?"

"They will do so if I command them—and pay them!"

"Well?"

"Here is the trouble. The most powerful witch-doctor of all, the man with most magic and knowledge, the man to whose door the track is worn deepest by the people, lives in the smallest village. This man secretly hates me and will

oppose anything but war. His voice will hearten those who will make private raid and foray."

"Why does he hate you, O *sultani*?"

"Because he lives in the smallest village," replied Leyeye neatly, "and I placed him there."

"I shall not ask the history of this: the thing is clear. And I?"

"You I would have come to my camps, and act between me and this man in the manner that seems best to you."

"Do I know him?"

"You know my people, you know the hearts of men, O Kingozi. What I, the *sultani*, could not say to this witch-doctor, you can say well."

"What words do I say to him?"

"That is for you to decide."

"If I were to offer him the post of witch-doctor at your own *manyatta*?" Kingozi suggested.

"That could be arranged."

"But the man who is at present witch-doctor: would he not make trouble, use his magic against you?"

"That could be arranged," repeated Leyeye. "And, Kingozi, is it not just that the white man

should pay the price of these things, if war is avoided?"

"It is just, O Leyeye," cried Kingozi heartily, "and I shall see that it is done, but see you for your part that not too much is paid!" he warned.

"Would I strengthen unduly the enemies of my house?" demanded Leyeye bitterly as he gathered his dark robe about him.

"Colonel Falkeyne," said Culbertson reëntering the tent, "I have unequivocally committed you to certain payments which we will call a treaty indemnity for entering the country without opposition. And to-night I move over to the native camp. Don't be alarmed if you do not hear from me to-morrow."

"All right," agreed Falkeyne instantly. "Is it safe?"

"Perfectly," replied Culbertson, but he knew it was not safe.

VI

SHIMBO the witch-doctor sat before the highly ornamented hut he had caused the warriors of his village to erect for him. In this great gathering

were witch-doctors from many villages and the cities of Leyeye's kingdom; and Shimbo was resolved that, even though he came from one of the smallest outpost hamlets, he should not show to disadvantage. He sat humped over a little fire. This great gathering revived old memories and rubbed old sores. His mind cast back many years to the time when, a young priest, in an important post near the throne, his pride had induced him to put himself against the rising power of Leyeye. He had been broken badly, and sent to the little village where for thirty years he had lived in comparative obscurity. Becoming aware of a presence he looked up to see a white man standing before him.

He recognized the white man perfectly as one who had eight years ago come to the village from the interior, and who had picturesquely paid his *hong*a or entrance tax with the skin of a lion that had attacked the royal tax collector. The visitor, undeterred by Shimbo's cold greeting, at once sat down.

"*Jambo*, O Shimbo, greatest of *muoiins*," he said. "Your fame has sounded in my ears for a

long time past; and now I have come to greet you in person."

Shimbo's red eyes shifted, but he made no answer. The white man motioned to his wizened, wrinkled servant who stood near. The latter handed his master a cup and a canteen.

Kingozi filled the cup with water. He passed his hand slowly across the surface, and lo! the clear liquid turned a deep pink, as always happens to water when permanganate crystals are dropped therein.

"Hah!" ejaculated Shimbo in surprise.

"Would you learn that magic?" suggested Kingozi. "I will teach you."

"*N'gapi*—how much?" grunted Shimbo, who should know the ways of magicians.

"It is nothing—a gift of friendship," disclaimed the white man. "This is yours for the asking—a great magic. And also twenty fat cows, and a piebald bull, and six cases of the white man's tobacco, and enough brass wire to have paid an old-time *hong*a."

Shimbo's eyes glistened. This was great wealth.

"*N'gapi*," he repeated, however.

"It is known," said Kingozi, "that you are the greatest of all *muoiins*. The wisdom of all the others is as the light of the stars to the light of the sun. When one of these others raises his voice men listen and then inquire whether what they hear is wise and true. When Shimbo speaks men say at once, this is the truth, this is the best thing to do."

"What is it you want?" insisted Shimbo, who was too old and experienced for illusions.

"Peace," said Kingozi, repeating the *sultani's* argument. "The white man desires a road; your people want pasture. One does not interfere with the other."

Shimbo lost interest.

"Peace is in the hands of Leyeye," he answered.

"Leyeye wants peace."

"Let him then declare it," grunted Shimbo.

"His people want war."

"It is for Leyeye to control his people, not for me."

"If the *muoiins* make magic, and that magic is for peace, and they tell the people that all omens

are for peace, then the commands of Leyeye are made easy."

"Let the *muoiins* make magic, and see what it declares."

"Twenty fat cows, a piebald bull, six cases of *m'zungu* tobacco, brass wire to cover a war spear, and the magic of turning water to blood," commented Kingozi, "and the magic Shimbo makes and tells to the other *muoiins* will be the magic that is told to the people."

For the first time Shimbo showed real animation.

"Who is Shimbo?" he demanded passionately. "An old man near to die! He lives in a village far in the thorn wilderness! His voice reaches few. He has neither wealth nor honour! His hut is humble, his wives are few, his slaves are none! Why should such a man be listened to? He is not one who speaks to the people. When magic is publicly announced such as Shimbo must sit silent and listen. It is Munei, the chief of all witch-doctors, who dwells at the *manyatta* of Leyeye, whose riches are as the game of the plains and whose slaves are as the leaves of grass."

"When the omens of peace are announced," said Kingozi, playing his trump card, "it shall be Shimbo, not Munei, who shall announce them. He shall then be chief of all witch-doctors; and he shall dwell in the *manyatta* of Leyeye."

"The wind blows through the branches," said Shimbo after a pause.

"Did you ever know a white man to lie?"

"These are your words: are they also the words of Leyeye?"

"Leyeye himself shall say them to you."

Shortly after midnight Kingozi arose rather stiffly. At last the deal was completed. Shimbo had agreed. The old man required much convincing before he would believe in the sincerity of the offer. When realization came to him, and he understood his importance in the situation, he proceeded to drive his bargain. But at length Kingozi was able to go to his rest assured that the invisible gods were going to be properly manipulated. He did not dare return to the white man's camp, nor show himself here too prominently. Therefore, under the guidance of Cazi Moto, he entered one of the better native shelters. As he

had often been in like case before he slept very soundly until morning.

He was awakened by the sound of distant bugles, and looked forth in time to see the flag rising over the distant camp. The native warriors were already astir; and as Kingozi looked about at the thousands of determined fierce countenances, at the forests of spears planted upright in the ground, he congratulated himself that the necessity of pressing through by force was passing.

At the proper hour he took his way to the collection of larger shelters where Leyeye and his court were encamped. A light palisade surrounded them. Gorgeously panoplied warriors leaned against this. From within came the sounds of women's laughter. Kingozi entered the gateway.

The first person of consequence he encountered was old Shimbo himself. And he was now of considerable consequence. He wore a new and heavily embroidered tanned robe, and was attended by four slaves. In his hand he carried the carved staff of his new high office.

"Jambo, O Chief of all *muoiins!*" said Kingozi.

"Jambo, *bwana*," returned Shimbo with great dignity. He seemed about to pass, then turned back. "The magic of blood, the cattle, the tobacco, the wire—they are not forgotten?"

"They are not forgotten," Kingozi assured him. "And you have made magic this morning?"

"Yes, *bwana*."

"It was good magic."

"It was magic for peace between the white man and my people," replied Shimbo.

Kingozi's interview with Leyeye was equally satisfactory. The *sultani* had revealed one qualification of leadership, promptitude. The witch-doctors had all been "seen." Leyeye presented a bill of expenses to arouse the envy of a Tammany leader in the days of Tweed. Kingozi listened with faint dismay, but reflected that after all this was cheaper than war would have been. When at last he arose to depart all things were planned and arranged. There remained only the trifling detail of informing the people.

"I see that Shimbo has already the part of *muoiin* here," remarked Kingozi casually. "How

did you arrange matters with Munei, the former head *mouiin*?

Leyeye looked him blandly in the eye.

"It was too bad: Munei had the bad luck to die suddenly in the night," he replied.

VII

FOR the various reasons thus fully set forth it happened that Shimbo did not return to the village; that Simba, newly made warrior, nevertheless made no war; that to this day there has been no war between the English and Leyeye's people; that the latter still continue to think themselves free and unsubdued. Since thus the office of witch-doctor was open in Shimbo's village, it followed naturally that Mukeku took on the job. This left his office of headman vacant. M'Kuni, the father of Simba, being the wealthiest and most prominent of the elders, succeeded as headman. Then Simba became the son of a chief instead of merely one among many warriors. For a time that had little bearing on anything but Simba's immediate comfort and happiness: but the time came—as will be shown in another

story—when the fact caused him to be chosen for foreign duty. And thence many consequences.

All of which is the same the world over. Great causes producing also the by-product of little results: obscure causes arriving eventually at great consequences. Nations moving for apparently the sole purpose of modifying the life-fate of some insignificant individual; a witch-doctor of a native hamlet deciding the fate of races. That is Politics.

CHAPTER III

TRELAWNEY LEARNS

ABOUT two years after the government occupation of a certain part of Africa it was considered desirable to extend the sphere of influence to include a remotely outlying district that had heretofore been let severely alone. This district was edged by the mountain forests, faced by the foothills, and remote from the high veldt—a pleasant land full of waters and green grass. Also full of savages.

The latter were said to be related to the Samburu and to be badly disposed. Since it was impossible to keep ivory hunters and Somali caravans from the north from passing through on the most obvious route, the next best thing was to attempt some sort of administration.

The higher powers were at their wits' ends. The tribe, and their affiliated brethren, numbered, at a guess, something like a million and a half

people; and they had any amount of accustomed cover in which to hide.

"Military occupation!" groaned the D. C., quoting his instructions from Downing Street, "I wish our respected Chief knew the first thing about this country! It would take a solid regiment to occupy that district! And I have two battalions of native troops for the whole blessed country!"

"They are native troops—but they are the K. A. R.," the Governor reminded him.

"Oh, the fuzzy-wuzzies are all right," admitted the Commissioner, "but they are too few. I can't go to war with what I can spare from two battalions, and that's flat."

"Well?" queried the Governor placidly. He knew his commissioner.

"And the Civil Officers! Fresh from Downing Street! Know the native as a friend and brother only! Full of theory! Conscientious scruples against corporal punishment, by gad! Or throat-full with twaddle about the white man's prestige! Self-opinionated, narrow, insular, hide-bound——"

"Best of our blood: wonderful boys; governing kingdoms at five and twenty," interrupted the Governor, still placidly.

"With a little experience, yes, I agree," said the D. C., "but these boys have none, none whatever. They get it fast; but in the meantime, what? It's all very well to let them cut their teeth on such peoples as the Kikuyus, but how about the Masai or these Sukas? To handle such a touchy situation needs a man of experience, or a regiment of troops: and where am I to get either? Better let sleeping dogs lie, say I. Let 'em get on as they have been getting on."

"And some day some confounded German or Austrian or Belgian will get scuppered up there, and we'll have intervention and lose the shop," said the Governor.

The D. C. sat bolt upright, his hands grasping strongly the arms of his chair, his eyes staring out of the window.

"Boy!" he called smartly; then to the white-clad servant who instantly responded he issued a rapid order. "I caught a glimpse of just our man," he explained to the Governor, "I am

stupid not to have thought of him before. He is an ivory hunter named Culbertson."

"The man the natives call Kingozi?"

"The same. He has been in this part of the country now about ten years: came in when they paid *hongas*. He knows natives from A to Zed, and they like him. If he'll only take on the job——"

The door opened to admit the ivory hunter. He was a man of about thirty, broad of shoulder, a trifle stooped, with wide-spaced gray-blue eyes, a square forehead, a bushy black beard, and crisp, waving, upstanding hair.

"Sit down," the D. C. invited him, and proceeded to detail his troubles.

"The Suka," commented the ivory hunter, "that's the crowd that lives up near old Saunder's hunting country, isn't it?"

"They seem to be getting restless," said the D. C.

Kingozi grinned.

"Quite likely. That's the lot that fool Gregory and his two assistant fools went and shot up so extensively, isn't it?"

"What was that?" interrupted the Governor.

"Happened four years ago," explained the D. C. with a slight embarrassment. "Before we took over. These people were new to the country and went up there hunting. They became frightened over some of the usual nigger foolishness, and started shooting and fighting their way out. Wrote a book about it—quite exciting."

"Oh, that—yes."

"Silly rot," commented Kingozi, "Great heroes! Fought a rear-guard action. Potted 'em at three hundred when they showed their faces. Kept their heads they'd have had no trouble at all. Sukas wonder yet what it was all about. But, as you say, they are restless!"

"Well, we've got to make that country safe; and we want you to take on the job," said the D. C. bluntly.

"Who, me? Not!" said Kingozi. "I'm no officer of the government and never will be as long as you get your marching orders from some old granny in Downing Street who thinks that all Africa is a dense jungle full of fevers and monkeys. Me, I boss myself."

But the Governor had not been made governor merely because he took a good photograph. He interposed and talked British Empire until Kingozi wilted.

"If I take on the job, do I do it my way?" he asked abruptly.

"Certainly."

"Absolute free hand?"

"It is yours."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I won't consider an official position. None of your oaths and salaries for me. But I will go. You pick out a nice, chubby, red-cheeked, bah-Jove youngster, fresh from England, and give him the job. I'll go along and coach him. When I get through—if we have any luck—we'll have those Sukas nicely tamed; and we'll have an educated District Commissioner to keep up the good work. And I can quit and go about my business."

"Excellent!" cried the Governor and the D. C. in a breath.

"But I want it understood that I spank this youth and make him stand in a corner if he doesn't obey orders!" warned Kingozi. "I don't want

any back talk, or questioning of methods, or his own initiative, or any of that rot. And no attention paid to his reports if he has the nerve to make them. I know the festive native, and I'll handle him my own way or not at all. Understood?"

"Understood."

"Very well. Pick out your youngster. And the more he is for God and Old England, Britons never shall be slaves, no gentleman would ever think of it, and all the rest of that, the better it will suit. I want him to play golf; and dress for dinner; and perish for his tea; and be unwilling to pot a meal off sitting guineas because it isn't sporting; and to perish miserably if he hasn't got on the right sort of breeches when he shoots kongoni; and if it isn't done, you know, that settles it. Got such a specimen?"

The Governor and his D. C. laughed.

"Imported for the purpose. Young Trelawney will just fill your bill."

"Trelawney," repeated the ivory hunter. "Christian name isn't Percy?" he inquired hopefully.

II

THE Government of the Empire moved up into the Suka country the following week. It consisted practically of three detachments, although they were much intermingled. There was one consisting of a wizened little black native dressed in faded khaki and lugging a worn double rifle; two porters carrying a brace of officers' battered tin boxes; two more with a decidedly second-hand green tent; and a miscellaneous half dozen bearing queer old bundles apparently on their way to a rummage sale. Then another, larger group, swinging proudly along beneath an elaborate new outfit—four-men tent, eight tin boxes, three loads of ammunition, a patent bath, much new yellow leather. Also two men with three new guns. The third detachment was the foundation of the other two, and transported food both white and native. Six straight, soldierly Sudanese, carrying their well-polished old Snider muskets at a military angle, marched in the rear. Six was all he required, so Kingozi said.

Kingozi had retired behind an impenetrable

reserve and a short black pipe that burned perilously close to his beard. But his eyes moved observantly from one item to another. They rested with apparently a deep and amused satisfaction on two things: one was a bag of golf clubs; the other was their owner.

Trelawney was a red-cheeked, clear-eyed youth, with the smallest imaginable moustache; very young but concealing the fact well; completely equipped with ideas but incoherent in their expression; secretly aquiver with an enthusiasm it would have killed him of mortification to have acknowledged. He had brought his entire outfit from Piccadilly and the Haymarket, and as a consequence greatly resembled advertisements. Withal, as Kingozi had discovered, at heart a modest and diffident youth beneath all his upper-class assurance, so Kingozi's heart warmed to him.

The boy was naturally vastly excited. He was going direct from the sheltered life of his island not only into Africa, but into a part of Africa so remote that heretofore it had been visited—and that but rarely—by professional ivory hunters only! He was going into the great game country

where one lived by one's rifle and where rhinoceros and giraffe and lion were matters of everyday! He was venturing among heretofore untamed savages, charged with the mission—at his age—of governing a kingdom! And best of all he was going in the company of the celebrated Culbertson, the best-known hunter in Africa; Culbertson who had gone right across the continent with no resources but his wits and his weapons; Culbertson who had shot more elephants than he, Trelawney, ever hoped to see; Culbertson, who in the distance had loomed across the imagination like a legend, and whose inscrutability at close range had only added to his attraction! No wonder Trelawney had to look rather extraordinarily bored to conceal his feelings.

Every small, accustomed detail of safari life was wonderful—the making and breaking of camp, the method of march, the discipline, the peoples passed on the road, the wide, wild vast scenery, the birds, the monkeys, the “things that jump up as you pass,” and especially the game herds. Never had Trelawney seen so many wild animals; never had he dreamed that so many existed. He

tried to identify them with his confused book recollections; his finger itched for the trigger; his hunter's soul strained at the leash. But he did not know whether it was done, you know; so he inhibited that desire also, and trudged on longingly.

The celebrated ivory hunter seemed a taciturn sort. He smoked his black pipe, and slouched along, and apparently saw nothing. It was three hours before he spoke at all, and then only to proffer a most extraordinary question. He removed his pipe from his mouth and asked abruptly:

"Is your given name Percy?"

"Why, no. Did you know of a Trelawney by the name of Percy? Mine is Allan."

"Sorry," said this extraordinary man with an air of regret. And now what could he mean by that?

The journey consumed three weeks. By the end of that time Trelawney had begun an incursion into the Swahili language; he had shot considerable game for camp; he had unconsciously absorbed a few ideas; and he had begun to consider himself quite an old-timer. But he had not got

much further with his companion. Kingozi seemed entirely sufficient to himself. He was not unfriendly—quite to the contrary—but he appeared absorbed in an inner life. At times he carried on long talks with the wizened black man whom Trelawney learned to call Cazi Moto, but in Swahili. Culbertson's idea of human intercourse seemed to be the sociable silence.

III

THEY arrived and selected a location for a post and at once started the hundred-odd porters they had brought with them to building. The location was a wide opening of a hundred acres or so at the fringe of the forest. It looked out through a panelling of scattered trees far abroad over the veldt. A stream of clear water ran through it; and the grass at this elevation was green.

Under Cazi Moto's supervision and Kingozi's inspection the porters built first of all a tremendous circular house with a high, conical roof. The frame was of poles, the walls of papyrus stalks, and the roof thatch of grass. It had three windows, without glass, but capable of being closed by

white cotton cloth; and a wide door. The camp cots were arranged on one side; a table was built for the other, together with canvas chairs; shelves were fastened to the wall. A lamp and its attendant tin of precious paraffin oil were installed.

Opposite these administrative quarters were five well-built smaller huts. In two dwelt the *askaris*, as the Sudanese troops were called. The others were given to Cazi Moto, the two gunbearers, the two personal boys, and the cook. In the centre of the square thus formed was erected a peeled flag pole with halliards, and when everything was completed Kingozi caused a parade of all the men. They stood in lines, while the flag was bent on. And then as it fluttered aloft, the *askaris* fired a fine, resounding, smoky black-powder salute with their Sniders. Trelawney, very erect, stood fingers to helmet, his mind singing with high thoughts as to the extension of the empire, outposts of civilization and the like, and he offered up a little prayer—though he would not have so considered it—that he might be worthy.

And after all these things were done, the hundred-odd porters shouldered their meagre

effects, and the forest closed behind them. The two white men with their dozen attendants were alone among millions of savages. Trelawney was horrified to discover in himself the least tremor of regret as the last of that sturdy file disappeared.

"There's a lot of work could be done here," he suggested. "Those chaps could be very useful."
"There's a horde of other men hereabouts," said Kingozi.

"But will they work for us?"

"That's the very first thing we must get them to do," said Kingozi.

Up to this time Kingozi had paid no attention whatever to the inhabitants. The latter had hovered, had ventured cautiously into the outskirts of the clearing, had even opened conversations with some of the men. None had approached the white men, and no women nor children had appeared. But when the safari men had been safely dispatched, Kingozi removed his short black pipe long enough to ask:

"Well, time to get in touch with these people. What are you going to do now?"

Trelawney stared at him with dismayed amazement. Both the Governor and the D. C. had been very explicit as to the status. The ivory hunter was to have actual charge; he, Trelawney, was to be merely the figurehead, but at the same time was to learn as much as he could.

"But that is just what I am going to ask you!" he cried.

Kingozi shook his head.

"You're in charge here; and you're responsible," said he.

"But I suppose——" cried Trelawney; then he threw back his head. "Very well," he said curtly. "But this is all new to me."

Kingozi laid his hand on the young fellow's knee.

"That's the spirit," he said kindly. "Do your duty: and I'll try to see you don't go far wrong. What first?"

"Well," said Trelawney doubtfully, "I suppose we'd better go direct to headquarters. I think I shall summon the King to an interview."

"Should not you go to see him?"

"Should I?"

"I'm not suggesting; I'm asking your opinion."

"In that case," Trelawney mused—"hang it all! I'm so new at this! Well, I should say it would impress him more to come and see me."

"No question of that. But if he sends an official instead?"

Trelawney's idea was developing.

"No others need apply. I'd have Cazi Moto give him a present and send him back."

"And if the King refused to come?"

"I don't know," replied Trelawney frankly. "But I think he would. If he didn't I suppose I could think of some scheme to see the old bounder: or else I'd refuse to do anything but play with my own dolls for awhile or something."

"And if that annoyed him and he sent over to have us speared?"

"I suppose that's the chance we are taking, isn't it?" asked Trelawney simply.

They smoked for a time.

"Am I right?" asked the young man at last

"Try it and see," replied Kingozi.

IV

THE King was summoned; he sent his Prime Minister, who was politely received by Cazi Moto, denied a sight of the Bwana M'Kubwa, given a drink of sweetened coffee, enriched with a small present, and returned right side up with care. He carried with him, also by instructions, that one of the white men was no less a personage than the celebrated Bwana Kingozi, Fighter of Elephants; but that Bwana Kingozi was like the visitor, a satellite to the real lord who was Bwana Marefu. Marefu was the name already bestowed on Trelawney by the natives. And by this measure of values could be guessed the importance of Bwana Marefu.

For the reason that his curiosity was thus strongly aroused the King made his visit. It was a tremendous occasion with elements of throngs of gorgeous spearmen, numerous young women decked in cowries, files of slaves bearing gifts of firewood and milk, the beating of drums, clash of weapons, blowing of horns, and such a riot of savage noise and colour that Trelawney was

thrilled with the barbaric romance of it. He fortunately knew what to do because he remembered Culbertson's incidentally mentioning the procedure in the course of some anecdote. And Kingozi, sitting by, saw that his ingeniously planted instructions had been remembered.

Trelawney, with great dignity, touched the gifts, indicating acceptance; he shook hands with the thumb grasp of friendship; he then entered into high converse—through Kingozi and Cazi Moto—with his majesty. He felt rather an ass, sitting in his canvas chair acting as though he were the whole thing while old Culbertson, older, wiser, greater, more experienced in every way, stood back of his chair like a servant! He flushed, wondering if Culbertson thought him a cocky little bounder. Then he caught sight of the flag above him, and into his heart came assurance. He was not merely Trelawney: he was the Empire.

He had given considerable thought to his opening speech with M'Booley, which was briefly to the effect that he had been sent by the King of the *Inglishe* to bring justice and happiness to

this remote corner of his realm; that he relied upon M'Booley as a loyal subject to obey; that back of him was the might of Britain; and he trusted they would live together as brothers. To this Kingozi, who was to act as interpreter, listened with attention. Then he spoke to M'Booley in Swahili as follows:

"This Bwana M'Kubwa has come to rule you. He commands you bring him food and firewood. He tells you to remember the War against the Wakamba. He says to issue orders among your peoples that wars and spearings must cease. He promises you that he will allow no white man and no Somali to steal from the people. He says that the people must bring their quarrels to him and he will judge them. He says that he comes as a friend, but that in case of necessity he can strike heavily."

M'Booley glanced around him.

"These are big words, papa," he commented, "and a light *runga** with which to strike heavily."

"They are true words," replied Kingozi haughtily, "and the *runga* is too heavy to carry here unless

**Runga*—Club.

there is need for it. Remember the wisdom of Leyeye who made peace without war."

M'Booley glanced around him, and rose.

"Tell the Bwana M'Kubwa *qua heri*," he said enigmatically.

"He says he is gratified to say good-bye," Kingozi told the boy.

"How did he take my talk?" asked Trelawney.

"I think he was quite impressed," replied Kingozi gravely.

Immediately they sent presents of considerable value, and sat down to await results. Kingozi had the place cleared of natives and kept clear. Guards were stationed at night, and either Cazi Moto or his master was constantly afoot. In the mysterious night-ridden forest drums throbbed. An uninterrupted wailing chant rose. All about the tiny clearing its dwellers felt the unseen presence of thousands. Yet not a single human being showed himself. Then on the evening of the third day a single wrinkled old hag crept into the open and approached the spot where the two white men were sitting. She knelt humbly before

them and fumbling beneath her goat-skin robe she produced a little half-gourd containing a few ounces of *m'wembe* meal.

"Take, *bwana*," she said.

Kingozi drew a deep breath of relief.

"It is to be peace," he said.

V

FOR a month nothing much happened. Trelawney began to get impatient at the slowness with which affairs moved. The white men seemed to be tolerated but not accepted. In their own little circle they were supreme, but outside of it moved a swarming life whose meaning was concealed from them. The native women brought in food and firewood for which they were paid in beads. Men lounged about curiously, or squatted by the hour. If, on the other hand, Trelawney cared to visit any of the villages he could do so, wandering as he pleased among the huts, unmolested but unwelcome.

"I don't see what we are accomplishing here," he said impatiently to Kingozi. "We are suffered to administer justice and establish the *pax Bri-*

tannica, but they could all cut their throats out there, and we none the wiser."

"What do you want to do?" inquired Kingozi.

"I don't know. But I feel useless."

"They are getting accustomed to us; that's enough. In the meantime, you're getting some shooting; you're getting quite a bit of Swahili: and I suppose you're learning at least a little something. What?"

"There are ten different tribes in this mess, and that's all I know. They have chiefs, or kings, or sultans of their own, but not one has come in, and I wouldn't know where to find them. I feel helpless. I wish I had some hold on them."

"Like hostages in war time."

"Precisely. But we're not at war."

"Some scheme to make being a hostage a desirable thing."

"Might feed and pay a few select ones."

"Perhaps adding to that a little nigger glory to make the job especially attractive. Of course a real hostage must be of the better class."

And in half an hour Trelawney was possessed of a fully-developed idea which he was honestly

convinced was original with himself. In time it was carried into effect.

Trelawney organized for the majesty of the British Empire as represented in his person a body-guard composed of the eldest sons of each of the *sultanis* of the Suka nation. These youths were given separate quarters. Never did Trelawney stir abroad without this escort. Each young man was encouraged to panoply himself as elaborately as possible; and emulation was skillfully encouraged by wise old Cazi Moto. Each for the honour of his tribelet got himself up with the utmost in ostrich plume, keen and glittering spear, gaudily painted buffalo hide shield, wealth of jewelery and ornament, and imaginative pictorial treatment of his own cuticle. Probably ten more picturesquely gorgeous savages were never before gathered together in one band. They trailed Trelawney two by two, looking tremendously haughty and aloof, and they were bitterly envied.

In Trelawney's mind the original idea rapidly developed. He added small details. The body-guard paraded solemnly, morning and evening, to raise and lower the flag; and when the flag was

down they zealously cleared the natives out. Their duties were made light but very showy and important. One of them was the bearing of messages, either to the natives round about, or to the seat of government. In order to distinguish them in the performance of this task Trelawney had them wind a narrow band of red cloth about half way up the spear blade. It was the badge of the messenger; and all the people were instructed to feed him and to otherwise expedite his journey. This and a dozen other similar bits of ostentation Trelawney invented with the secret zest of a small boy.

"Seems silly," he told Kingozi in half apology, "awful lot of side. But side gets these beggars. And it holds them all together. Any of these tribes is bound to back up its crown prince, now isn't it?"

But while indubitably this diplomacy was effective in obtaining tolerance for the little community, it accomplished nothing toward closer relations. Again guided by Kingozi's skillful and apparently casual suggestions, Trelawney had formulated his immediate needs as three. The

first, that of peaceful relations, was already accomplished. On the second, that of administration of justice, not even a start had been made. The third, that of voluntary labour, was so far in the future as to remain completely below the mental horizon. The only work done anywhere was by the women; and they seemed fully occupied. The whole subject seemed ungraspable, like a smooth ball too large for the hand. Nothing was to be done save await what chance might bring. Trelawney fretted; but Kingozi, knowing his Africa, smoked his little pipe philosophically.

“Something always turns up in this country,” he said, “it’s the only generalization that is worth anything out here.”

Something did turn up. From time past memory of man—which in Africa does not mean as long as it sounds—the Somalis with horses for sale had travelled across Jubaland to East Africa. This led them through one corner of the Suka country. It was a lower corner in an arid region, not inhabited, so nobody cared. But in the third month of Trelawney’s occupancy, owing to a freak rain that turned the arid belt

into a mire, a Somali caravan swung north. It camped overnight at the edge of the forest. Then it moved on. The following morning, investigating the cause of much drum-banging excitement, Trelawney was told eight different tales. They had only one common basis, and that was outrage by Somalis. The outrage varied from simple loot to arson, kidnapping, and rape.

"Probably stole a dozen chickens," said Kingozi. "But that is not the point. The real point is that this lot is arming to attack those Somalis. What are you going to do about it?"

"Aren't you going to advise?"

"No; but I'll tell you this much, that I see here the big opportunity. Think it over five minutes, and I'll go break out a little ammunition—for one purpose or another."

Pondering the last phrase Trelawney came to the proper conclusion with a celerity that would have been impossible to his former insularity.

He ordered out his gorgeous bodyguard and his six *askaris* with their Snider muskets. He armed Cazi Moto, the two gunbearers, even the personal boys, and the cook. At the head of this small

army he went in search of Kingozi. The latter looked up from his cartridge cases.

"Going to smash the entire Suka nation?" he inquired.

"No; but I am going to arrest a small portion of the Somali nation," Trelawney replied.

"Good boy!" cried Kingozi, "I apologize for the 'Percy.' "

VI

THEY debouched from the forest to find M'Booley's village a seething turmoil. Armed men were rushing here and there; voluble women were shrieking. Inextricable confusion. But at the appearance of Trelawney's little force the women precipitately disappeared. The men, seizing their shields, followed. The village clearing was empty, but in the edge of the forest weapons glittered and dark bodies glided. In vain Trelawney shouted encouraging words. No voice answered.

He looked perplexedly at his followers. This was something he had not anticipated. Kingozi was watching him keenly.

From the ranks of the bodyguard a young

man stepped forward. He was a very ugly young man, but something engaging, straightforward, and honest shone from his uncomely face.

"*Bwana* would have *shauri** with M'Booley?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Trelawney.

Without further speech the young man turned, walked steadily across the opening, and disappeared in the forest.

"By Jove!" cried Kingozi, "I didn't suppose any raw native had it in him!"

"What?" asked Trelawney.

"Pluck; sheer pluck."

"What do you mean?"

"There's about nine chances out of ten he's speared before he opens his face."

"Oh, surely not! One of their own people: a chief's son!"

"I know natives," said Kingozi curtly.

A long period of uneasiness during which Kingozi, his rifle across the crook of his elbow, half turned to keep his eyes on the rest of the ornate bodyguard. At last figures appeared. M'Boo-

**Shauri*—Council, Talk.

ley was discovered accompanied by half a hundred of his warriors—and the bold messenger.

M'Booley was sullen and suspicious, but Trelawney plunged at once into his subject.

“O King,” he said, “I go with my men to take these Somali robbers for punishment. From you I need assistance. Select of your bravest men one hundred to come with me; and tell them that they must obey my orders, and mine only.”

At the first sentence M'Booley's sullenness vanished. After that the only difficulty was to make selection from the swarms of volunteers.

But Trelawney was firm. Never did he relinquish the upper hand. When finally the expedition was ready there was no doubt that it was the white man's expedition, and the white man's only.

They followed immediately on the Somali's footsteps, and since the Somalis were in considerable force and are a cheeky lot anyhow, they were soon overtaken. It must be remembered that the caravan thought it had to do with Sukas only. White men and white men's arms were unexpected and disconcerting

By way of a didactic parenthesis, the Somali comes from northeastern Africa; he is chocolate colour; his features are as regular and clean cut as those of a Greek God; he wears a gorgeous gold-embroidered turban, a long gown, and an ornamental over vest. His manners are courtly; he rides like a Cossack; he has never been subdued; he is contemptuous of fear; he is thoroughly unreliable; and his opinion of himself is only equalled by his contempt of everybody else. Altogether he is the handsomest, most splendid, independent, rascally barbarian in the world. And his pride is as the pride of Lucifer.

Trelawney entered into his campaign with the zest of a small boy playing soldier. He selected a narrow defile for his ambush, managed to compress the ebullient undiscipline of his troops to watchful waiting, with his own *kiboko* thrashed soundly a number of too eager spirits; and at the proper moment hopped out so suddenly and unannouncedly that the twenty-odd Somalis were dragged from their horses before they could fire a shot. This was not to the discredit of Somali alertness. As has been pointed out, they thought

they had to do with natives only; and they knew that natives were incapable of a daylight surprise attack. Someone would surely give the show away.

And then you are to imagine the howling, extravagant joy of that return: the Sukas dancing wildly; the *askaris* very rigid and dignified; the ornate guard doing its best to imitate them. And then the women, the men who had been left behind, a horde of children running out to meet them; the sudden production of the long, narrow dance shields; the roaring of drums; the synco-pated snatches of rhythm from a dozen impromptu *n'gomas*; the sullen captives in their turbans and long robes; and Trelawney proud as proud, but outwardly bored almost to extinction, riding a captured horse at the head of it all.

He led the way directly to the government clearing—known as the *Boma*. Therein preparation for such an occasion he had long since caused to be built a big corral facing a small shed with three walls. In the shed had been placed a rough table and two chairs. Straightway he marched to this throne and, standing, he brought his *kiboko* smartly down on the table.

"*Angalia!*" he commanded attention; then with a flicker of the eye in Kingozi's direction he announced gravely in English, "Oyez! Oyez! Court is opened!"

VII

ALL that was necessary was to question witnesses, find out what crime had been committed, give judgment, and enforce punishment. That was all.

At the end of four solid hours of close questioning Trelawney, his brain reeling, turned to his amused and silent companion.

"I can't make head or tail of it!" he cried. "Can you?"

"Don't try," replied Kingozi. "Don't go too much into particulars. Just make up your mind in a broad general way. Guilty or not guilty?"

"Of what?" asked Trelawney despairingly.

"Oh, of raising hell."

"Guilty, then—by all means guilty!"

"Punishment?"

"I suppose *kiboko*."

Kingozi leaned forward.

"I don't often advise," he said, "but you don't know Somalis. You can't flog them. It does no good, and sooner or later they'll have a knife in you."

Trelawney arose and again struck on the table with his whip. He now talked Swahili with fair fluency, so made his address direct.

"Listen," he said. "This is my judgment. These men have acted as enemies, and so now they are prisoners of war. It is my power to keep them prisoner or have them killed. That I shall not do. It is my will that they be given each one horse, and one gun for all of them that they may get meat, and water bottles; and all their other horses and guns and property are mine; and that my young men take them to the Guaso (Narok) and turn their faces to their own country. And when they come to their own country they must give this message to their own people: that here is now the White Man's Law and the White Man's Peace. Those who come by this way must come quietly." He paused then spoke over the heads of the prisoners to the multitude: "The White Man's Law is here," he repeated. "And each

morning at the third hour* I shall be here at this place. And those who wish justice shall come here. I have spoken. *Bassi!*"

He struck the table again with the *kiboko* and turned negligently away as though further proceedings interested him not at all. But Cazi Moto and the troops, obeying an undertone from Kingozi, rushed zealously forward.

"*Bassi! Bassi! Bassi!*" they repeated, thrusting and hurrying the people forth.

In a few minutes the place was cleared. Only remained the prisoners and the white men's escort. Trelawney covered a sudden embarrassment behind a cigarette.

"Fearful lot of side, of course," he muttered as though in apology. "Feel like a bally ass actin' up like a little tin king. Thought it might buck up the beggars——"

But Kingozi cut him short.

"You couldn't have done better," he said.

Trelawney flushed with a genuine pleasure.

Kingozi at once shifted the subject.

"Where's the sportsman who carried the mes-

*9 o'clock.

sage to M'Booley?" he demanded. "Oh, there you are. *N'jo!*"

The ugly but attractive young savage stepped from the ranks of the bodyguard.

"The Bwana M'Kubwa wishes to thank you," said Kingozi.

"*Assanti, bwana.*"

"What you did was good. Did you not know that these people would think you an enemy and kill you?"

"That thought came to me, *b'wana.*"

"Were you not afraid?"

"A long time ago, *bwana*, it happened that you yourself cut from a dead lion a piece of fat, and with it you touched my forehead and my heart, and you said these words: 'The lion, *simba*, is bravest among beasts. Remember that this magic will make it possible for you to be the bravest among your companions'; and so it comes that I feel no fear."

Kingozi's brow knit, then cleared.

"You were then a child," he said, "I remember. You stood before the lion with your spear. Your name is Simba."

"*Simba, bwana.*"

"*Bassi!*" said Kingozi, and the young man stepped back.

"That chap will be worth watching," he told Trelawney. "He's unusual. Well, your court is opened."

"If only they'll bring me their complaints!"

"Bring you their complaints! You'll be swamped with them. No, you can rest easy on that score."

"Only remains to get them to work," said Trelawney. "That promises to be the most difficult of all. What couldn't a man do with labour here!"

"What, for example?"

"Why," replied Trelawney dreamily, stretching his hand over the immediate foreground. "Just think, with a hundred men and a little irrigation and a flock of sheep, what a wonderful eighteen holes a man could put in there!"

Kingozi laughed aloud.

"You certainly do please me!" he cried.

"Are you keen on golf?" asked Trelawney, surprised, "I didn't know it!"

"Never played in my life," replied Kingozi, gazing with delight on his companion's puzzled face.

CHAPTER IV

TRUE SPORTSMEN

A YEAR and three months had passed since young Trelawney had taken charge of the Suka country. He had during that time dwelt quite alone with the veteran ivory hunter, Culbertson, alias Kingozi, whom the government in its wisdom had sent in to show Trelawney the ropes. Kingozi had, as far as Trelawney could determine, done little more than listen sympathetically from behind an extraordinarily short black pipe. But though he did not appreciate that fact, Kingozi's indirect suggestions had shaped his policy. Which amused Kingozi and satisfied him.

In black night his boy scratched on the door of the little hut, uttering low voiced his desire for entrance:

"Hodie !"

And Trelawney, immediately wide awake, gave the required answer:

“*Karibu !*”

The boy glided in with a lantern. He carried a tray with two cups of tea and some thin biscuit. By sun-up Trelawney and his friend, dressed in clean white, were ready to see that the flag in the *boma* was raised with proper ceremony. The six Sudanese *askaris* presented arms, the ornate and savage bodyguard of spearmen, formed—for diplomatic reasons—of the eldest sons of chiefs, stood rigid. Trelawney saluted.

Breakfast finished, Trelawney spent some time at his desk, after which he repaired to a sort of shed enclosed on three sides only, and surrounded by a stockade. Here, as in a canopied throne, he sat down with Kingozi seated at his right hand, and the little wizened black headman standing at his left. The enclosure was always full of natives, squatting and attentive, their spears thrust in the ground standing like a bright forest just outside the gate. The white men tolerated no arms within the enclosure.

Trelawney struck the table sharply with his *kiboko*. At once an elderly man stood up from among the multitude.

"Who are you?" asked Trelawney.

"O Bwana M'Kubwa, I am Nyanga, and I am headman of the village beyond the Hill."

"What is your complaint, O Nyanga?"

"Bwana, it happens that our people have cattle, and that each day they feed here and there on the Hill. But the people of the next village are bad; and they have secretly killed our cattle or stolen them; and our cattle are becoming less."

"How do you know this?"

"It is a thing well known."

"What is your wish?"

The old man's form straightened.

"My young men are many and brave. I wish to make war."

Trelawney's eyes snapped.

"That is forbidden; but if it is as you say then justice shall be done. Is anyone here present from this next village? No? Then here is my judgment: on the third day from this let Nyanga and the headman of this other village both appear before me. Simba!"

A young man stepped forward from the ranks of the bodyguard. A headdress of ostrich plumes

completely encircling his face added to the height and ferocity of his appearance. His supple, beautiful body was almost unclothed and shone red bronze in the sun. He wore glittering armlets of brass, a broad bead belt into which had been thrust the heavy *runga* or war club, and he carried lightly a vividly painted oval shield and the long-bladed war spear. The point of this latter he lowered until it almost touched Trelawney's breast. The white man fitted over it a narrow band of red cloth, the badge of the messenger.

"Go you to these two villages," he commanded, "and tell my commands in the public places. *Bassi!*" For the second time he rapped the table sharply with his *kiboko*. The complainant, who had evidently anticipated—and probably bragged of—immediate annihilation of his enemies, arose again to his feet.

"*Bassi! Bassi!*" cried a score of scandalized voices. He was hustled to his place, and his protests smothered.

Next one of Trelawney's own men reported that meat had been stolen, meat belonging to the *bwana* himself. Questioned, the informant dis-

claimed knowledge of the thief's individual identity, but knew that he belonged to a group of huts not far from the *boma*. Evidence taken. This proving good, Trelawney issued another order to his bodyguard. Shortly the inhabitants of the huts in question filed in looking very scared. Trelawney stared them over for several awful moments.

"Which of you stole my meat?" he demanded sharply.

No one answered.

"Very well; give each one ten lashes." He raised his *kiboko* for his customary signal.

"*Bwana, bwana !*" a half-dozen agonized voices appealed.

"Well?"

It now appeared there were two divisions, corresponding to the Indian totem divisions. The *kogonis* vehemently denied all guilt, and laid the crime on the *swarras*. The *swarras* stood sullen.

"Who among you is guilty?" sternly demanded Trelawney. No answer.

"Very well. Fifteen lashes for every *swarra*."

But this increase of punishment caused another

split. Certain families asserted an innocence that was not denied. Remained at last only the dozen individuals inhabiting one hut.

"I think we're down to the ones who actually ate the meat," said Trelawney to the other white man. "We'll let it go at that."

Kingozi chuckled.

"A man's innocence is assumed until he is proven guilty," he quoted.

"Not in Africa," replied Trelawney. "My motto here is 'punish somebody, the right one if possible, but everybody if necessary.'"

"Perfectly right," replied Kingozi, quite as though he had not himself taught the young man that doctrine.

By the time the last complaint was adjudicated it was getting on toward noon.

"Mind taking over sick-call?" he asked Kingozi. "I hate to bother you, but I am going to try to drum up some labour."

"I've nothing on; go with a free mind, my son."

Trelawney disappeared, accompanied by two of his honorary guard. He made his way down a

narrow jungle track through the forest. On either side, because of the dense growth, one could not see two rods; but overhead the eye rose through a tangle of rope vines to a canopy a hundred feet above. Only rarely did the sky show through. A cool green atmosphere flooded all space, as one would imagine the light at the bottom of the sea. By every evidence, save that of the well-trodden narrow path, the forest seemed wild and solitary. No sign of human occupancy was visible. Yet Trelawney knew that all about him dwelt thousands.

From the main track, here and there, side tracks branched. Invariably after ten feet or so they made a sharp turn, so that the sight was arrested. Down one of them Trelawney made his way. After two more twists he came to a wide clearing opening to the sky. Here stood in irregular groups a score of round huts with the conical grass-thatched roofs typical of this part of Africa. The ground was beaten hard and flat. Against the wattle walls of the houses leaned many women, either engaged in light housework, the polishing of iron or brass jewellery, or nothing at all. They were

unanimously gossiping, however, at the top of their lungs. An extraordinary number of naked children tumbled in the dust or raced here and there. Men squatted in small groups talking, or lay comfortably in the sun. A goat or so wandered confidently about, and extraordinarily diminutive chickens clambered into and over everything seeking what they might devour. Thin blue columns of smoke rose straight up fifty feet then spread to a haze that filled the forest and barred the rays of the sun. A happy, carefree, idle hum warmed Trelawney's heart. Already he was feeling a paternal interest and a secret pride in the irresponsible children beneath his charge.

For an hour, sitting under a shady tree, he talked with the men of the village who gathered to hear him. It was a friendly talk, with much chatter and laughter. At the end of that time he resumed his journey. By sundown he had thus visited four villages. Then he returned to the *boma*.

Entering the big round hut occupied by Culbertson and himself as official headquarters, he found Kingozi lying on his cot smoking his small

black pipe. He threw himself in his canvas chair and shouted for tea.

"Any luck?" asked Kingozi.

"I don't know. I went to four more villages and talked. Got plenty of promises, of course. They don't want to work. Why should they?"

"See old M'Booley?"

"Yes."

"What had he to say?"

"He told me to let him know how many men I wanted, and when, and he'd send them over."

"Well?"

"Don't you see?" said Trelawney desperately. "That wouldn't do me much good. I'd get a certain amount of actual labour accomplished; but that isn't what I'm driving at entirely. I want to civilize these beggars as far as I can. And industry is the first step toward civilization."

"True, O Solomon. But you can get your men from M'Booley, and I'll see that they are industrious!"

"That would be nothing more nor less than forced labour."

"I forget," said Kingozi, "what a frightful

bugaboo you *m'zungus** think forced labour is."

Trelawney flushed, but held his ground.

"My belief is that one accomplishes nothing but the physical result with forced labour," he asserted stoutly.

"Quite so. Here is tea," replied Kingozi with indifference.

They sipped the tea from the tall, tumbler-like *balauris*. After a little Trelawney resumed the discussion.

"I have thought about it a good deal," he said, "and I've got at the logic of it. These people have too few needs and desires; and these needs and desires are all satisfied too easily. The way to make them work is to make them want something they have to make an effort for—luxuries and all that."

"There's the *dukka*," suggested Kingozi, referring to the shop recently opened by an East Indian for barter with the Sukas. It stocked such things as brass, copper, and iron wire of different gauges; beads of various sizes and colours; dried paint

*Europeans.

colours for the face and body; snuff; bright blankets and cotton cloths; ear ornaments; coarse sugar, rank butter, and the like. "Old Mahrads may safely be said to carry luxuries."

"True, as far as they go. But the old blighter takes trade. He wants *m'wembe* and sisal and hyrax skins and any of the rest of the products of the country he can get his hands on. And the products of the country are produced by women. Fat lot of good that does in making the men industrious! I've a good mind to order the old fool to stop barter and take only coin for his goods."

Kingozi laughed outright.

"I think it a good idea," he chuckled. "But you must remember that Mahrads know perfectly well that you are the sole possessor of money here; that you have brought in many strong boxes of rupees; that if the Suka are to get money to pay for his goods, they must get it from you. He will salaam, and his respect for you will go up tremendously; for he—and all others with dark skins—will perceive that you are in spite of former differences a true Oriental despot, out for the

make, with the right idea of how to use your power after all, and that this talk of even-handed justice, altruistic disinterestedness, White Man's Peace, and the rest of it was clear poppycock, as they have suspected all along."

"Damn!" cried Trelawney.

He cogitated for some time, blowing thoughtful clouds of smoke. Kingozi watched his clean-cut, youthful face with some amusement and considerable kindly feeling.

"If the beggars only needed more things!" cried Trelawney at last. "Give them a piece of old flour sack and their notion of dress is satisfied; and so on! They should have more wants, more desires! I don't believe anybody works unless he has to. Compulsion comes from inside you—or outside you—one or the other."

"Philosophy," commented Kingozi.

Trelawney flushed as though he had been caught in a lie. Abruptly he reverted in manner from the Trelawney of the past year's development to the Trelawney fresh from Downing Street.

"Rotters," he ended. "S'pose I must just keep preachin'. Think I'll have a round to freshen up."

He knocked the ashes from his pipe, arose, seized a bag of golf clubs, and hurried out. Five minutes later he was at his game. Up to now he had acquired but six holes. They were scientifically laid out according to the theory of the game, and all they needed was a bit of work in smoothing the fairway, and in constructing the necessary hazards that as yet existed only on paper. The putting greens were fairly good, for on them Trelawney had concentrated his scanty supply of labour.

Trelawney teed and drove a smashing straight ball, and thereby experienced the appropriate thrill. He made the most of it, for he was perfectly aware that in all probability he had now a bad lie. Then he marched off with his swarm of caddies. Golf balls are scarce in Central Africa, but small boys very plenty. Therefore Trelawney invariably played with four caddies: one to carry the clubs, one straight ahead, one to the right for "slices," and one to the left for "pulls." The club carrier was the only one with any clothes, and he wore only the golf bag.

Trelawney returned at the end of an hour all

aglow with exercise and a new idea. While splashing in the scorching hot tub he imparted it to Kingozi through the flimsy walls of papyrus.

"D'ye know that Saturday is the King's Birthday?" he began.

"The fact had escaped me," replied Kingozi.

"Nothing like sport to make good feeling. What for an idea to get up a field day by way of celebration? Get in everybody for a big time. Let 'em run a *n'goma* of their own, of course. Same time have some athletic sports. Some of these Johnnies ought to be able to do something."

"Sounds interesting."

"I believe I'll do it," said Trelawney.

He entered into the idea with enthusiasm. The invitations went out through M'Booley. Soon after daylight the guests began to arrive. They teetered down the forest paths in single file, each carrying his lunch in the form of a section of sugar cane, a bunch of bananas, or mysterious packages wrapped in dried leaves. They stared at the *boma*, and the *n'goma* drums, and subsided on their hams to await what might befall. They came, and continued coming, tens, hun-

dreds, finally thousands. From a very busy life it seemed as though the entire Suka nation had snatched a day to see what the white man was up to now.

"By Gad! I'm glad I decided against furnishing refreshments!" gasped Trelawney.

Shortly after seven M'Booley, his prime minister, three favourites from his harem, and sundry ornate but unexplained individuals appeared with much pomp. They were escorted to a place kept clear in front of the house, and much honour paid them. Said honour consisted in (a) a chair for M'Booley; (b) *balauris* of sweetened coffee for all hands; (c) presents whose splendid appearance far outdid their intrinsic worth. The multitude eyed these proceedings and gave no sign. Then the flag was run up, and the *askaris* delivered a black-powder volley. Very satisfactory.

Next Trelawney purposed starting the sports of the day. Two of the boys brought forth a table on which was arranged a tempting array of objects. Trelawney made a speech. He mentioned the King, the prizes, and the hundred-yard dash. The course for the latter was cleared. But

no entries! In vain Trelawney explained clearly, holding up the temptation of acquiring one coil of brass wire. He became flustered at this lack of success.

"Try M'Booley," suggested Kingozi.

Trelawney explained. He wanted the best runners from each of the sub-tribes composing the Suka nation: he——

M'Booley interrupted him with a deprecating, upraised hand.

"Enough, *papa*," he said. "You shall have them."

He issued brief orders. Inside of five minutes twenty-six men listened to Trelawney's instructions. They stood here: there a short distance away was stretched a cord across the path. The man who broke that cord would be given a coil of brass wire.

He got no further. The twenty-six were off and away, deaf to imprecations and commands. Trelawney arrived to find the string very definitely broken. At least fourteen of the contestants firmly grasped fragments thereof, and on that possession based vehement claims of victory.

It took Trelawney five minutes even to get their excited attention; ten more to straighten out the dispute. He was red faced and perspiring, and on the verge of apoplexy from the holding onto his temper. He thought longingly of his *kiboko* and the immediate effect thereof, but restrained himself. This was supposed to be a festal occasion. The race was at last run; and successfully.

They had also jumping, both broad and high, a tug of war, throwing, shooting with bow and arrow, and hurling the spear both for distance and accuracy. Trelawney could not complain of lack of interest among the contestants. The spirit of rivalry followed very close upon the spirit of covetousness aroused by the truly magnificent prizes. It manifested itself in a shameless desire to "hunch," an unruly tendency to get away before the shot, and a fixed determination to dispute every result, no matter how obvious. Trelawney darted here and there. He became hoarse with shouting. His sweat-drenched garments clung to his figure. He controlled his temper.

"They're sporting beggars, anyhow," he gasped

to Kingozi, who sat in his canvas chair smoking his pipe and watching the show with rather a sardonic eye. "Take hold like good ones. When you reflect that it's the first time they ever went in for games, I call it topping!"

The active expansion of interest seemed to be confined to the contestants. The thousands sat about on their hams, and stared, and chewed sugar cane, and said nothing.

By mid-afternoon Trelawney had reached the last number on his program. This was to be a distance race. He explained his plan to Kingozi.

"I'm going to make it about two miles," he said. "Right-away down the track and return. Can't be at both ends of the course at once, so I'm going to show them where I put a yam under a bush about a mile out. Then I'll start them here, and the man who comes back first with the yam is the winner."

"That rather cuts out the chap who might be a little slow the first mile but strong at a finish, doesn't it?"

"I never thought of that," said Trelawney, somewhat dashed. Then he brightened, "Well.

what difference does it make? We're not timing this lot. The real race will be from here to the yam."

He led the contestants down the forest track, showed them where he laid the yam, explained several times the conditions, and returned to the *boma*. Then he lined them up, twenty-six bronze-red, naked, and shining figures. After three false starts—which necessitated much shrieking to call back the over-zealous—they were off. Trelawney, glancing at his wrist watch, wiped his streaming forehead, and sank into a canvas chair alongside his friend.

"I'll give them about twelve minutes," he hazarded. "Boy, bring me lime juice and sparklets."

The lithe figures entered the forest. Quiet fell. The squatting figures stared round-eyed.

Cazi Moto brought the tall *bàlauri*, and Trelawney sipped gratefully at its contents. Suddenly he set it down and uttered an ejaculation of surprise. From the forest leaped an eager figure followed almost immediately by several more. The contestants were returning!

"Blockheads!" cried Trelawney, thoroughly exasperated. "They've mixed it again! They haven't been gone three minutes!"

Closely followed by a half-dozen others the leading contestant dashed up. He eagerly thrust forward a yam.

"Here, *bwana*!" he gasped.

And his companions, close at his heels, also proffered yams. And before Trelawney had recovered his wits, all the other contestants had dashed into the clearing and were urging upon his attention yet more yams! The reasoning was perfectly clear: the *bwana* wanted yams, here were yams, why run an incredible distance for one?

Kingozi choked, arose hastily, and entered the hut, from which he did not emerge until the *n'goma* was well under way.

This was where the multitude had its innings at last, and with gusto did it enter into the occasion. All night long the drums roared and throbbed; the wild figures leaped with the shadows of the flames. Dawn found them still fresh as the proverbial daisies, and apparently willing to go on indefinitely. Trelawney was exhausted. Even

his youth had run dry. A headache hammered at his skull, and his eyes burned. Kingozi, accustomed through long years to this sort of thing, had been sleeping peacefully in the house since early evening. Trelawney wondered bitterly how he could do it!

He had not intended to feed this crowd, it was altogether too expensive, but by now he was desperate and felt that anything was cheap that promised to stop this interminable racket. So he instructed Cazi Moto, and in five minutes the dance had stopped and all were crowding toward the *boma* where a distribution of *potio* was taking place. As each received his allotment he disappeared silently into the forest.

Kingozi, awakened by the cessation of the noise, came out of the house. The gray of dawn was just filtering through the trees. He yawned and looked with amazement on his rather demoralized young companion.

"Party over?"

"I hope so," replied Trelawney vindictively. "I never want to see another again. I'm going to sleep a week! But I don't regret: I think it

worked. And the people are certainly good sportsmen! They went into it hard and enthusiastically once they were given a lead."

The last of the multitude were fading into the forest as the daylight grew strong. All but one group. These approached, headed by M'Booley. In them Trelawney recognized the contestants in his athletic contest of the day before.

"What is it?" he asked uneasily.

"The Bwana M'Kubwa," said M'Booley, "has asked my people to work for him, and has promised rupees for the work; and I have told the *bwana* that when the time came that he asked me to do so I would get him as many men as he might require."

"What the devil, does he think I want to go into all that at this time?" muttered Trelawney savagely to his friend. Aloud he said in Swahili: "That is true, O M'Booley, but until your people come to work of their own free will I do not want them."

A pause and a low-voiced consultation. Then M'Booley spoke again:

"My people have come of their own free will."

"What is the old rotter driving at?" queried Trelawney of Kingozi. "Say plainly," he urged the Suka king. "What is it these men want?"

"They say they have worked all one day," replied M'Booley, "and all day long they have done what the *bwana* has told them to do; and now they have come for their pay—ten *pesi* each for one day's work."

Trelawney was staring at him in blank astonishment. It was some moments before he got control of his voice.

"Did you hear what I heard?" he asked Kingozi, "are these chaps asking pay, wages, for taking part in the sports?"

"Looks like it," replied Kingozi with an irrepressible chuckle.

Trelawney's eyes glared, and his mouth twitched.

"Well, I've been through a lot with this lot," he began in a strangled voice. His emotions were too great for utterance. He swallowed twice. Then gradually his face calmed.

"He's right," he said abruptly. "Cazi Moto from the box with the white mark bring me the

small bag of money." He looked up at Kingozi. "Anyway, I got them to work," he said.

From the bag he counted out the thin nickel coins with the holes in the middle. The contestants received them, strung them on thongs, and departed.

"I'm not sure it isn't what you'd call an entering wedge," remarked Trelawney thoughtfully as he watched them go. He arose and stretched himself. "I'm too done to sleep," he remarked. "I think I'll just go a round of golf and a tub first. Will you play me a round?"

"What wages you offering?" asked Kingozi.

"You go to blazes!" cried Trelawney, marching off.

CHAPTER V

FORCED LABOUR

DRAWING on toward the second year of the administration of young Trelawney among the wild and untamed Sukas he began to get a little discouraged. To be sure he had, guided imperceptibly by the imperturbable Culbertson, alias Kingozi, and his able assistant Cazi Moto, accomplished a number of things. For example, the two white men, with only a dozen native attendants, had entered and peacefully settled down with the tribesmen. When one considers that these wild savages had been badly handled and generally shot up by a previous party hunting elephants; that they had long carried on remorseless war with every stranger from anywhere, this was something. Also the white men had so far gained confidence that their daily courts for the administration of justice were thronged. Peace with neighbouring tribes had

been established and maintained. The Governor and Provincial Commissioner who had dared the experiment of sending Trelawney and Kingozi were well pleased. But all this triumph was as ashes in the young man's mouth. Why? He had set his heart on planting here the seeds of civilization, and in civilization the first step was voluntary paid labour.

He was by now as wise a young man as before he had been superficial. Long months in the jungle had developed his philosophical and analytical side. He knew what he wanted. And therefore he scouted Kingozi's easy suggestion that a mere hint to M'Booley would be sufficient. That well-disposed despot would be glad to furnish from ten to a thousand men, and furthermore would see to it that they worked!

"Forced labour," objected Trelawney, with the same manner that two years ago he would have used in saying "paper collars!"

And any other sort of labour seemed impossible to get. Nobody wanted to work. Why should they? The women built very comfortable huts of wattle and grass; they raised amply sufficient

crops of *m'wembe*, *mahindi*, eating and cooking bananas; the small boys took care of the herds; and wealth to barter for such desirable luxuries as wire, snuff, *ghee*, well-flavoured eating soap, and the like were an easy surplus of the women's other industries. Well-fed, well-housed, well-clothed, well-ornamented; why on earth should any sane man want to work? They grinned amiably, and promised lavishly, and sat in the sun.

In the temporary backwater of suspended energies Trelawney had leisure to become a little homesick. Heretofore he had been too busy and too much interested in the novelty of the place, the people, and the power he held in his hands. He was still interested, but he wanted a change. He did not know what was the matter with him, but things seemed to have gone flat and stale. The shooting ceased to amuse; he was, as he confessed it, fed up with natives. It bored him. Kingozi knew well the symptoms. The vertical rays of a tropical sun get a man's nerves after a time—the 'ultra-violet rays; and the tropic heats and chills make for a jaded spirit. So well is this

recognized that Government ordinarily gives its servants six full months off every few years.

Trelawney began to talk of England, especially after the daily hot bath before dinner, when the men sat outside smoking in the cool of first evening. He had been raised on a hilltop in Surrey. He liked to recall to Kingozi little things—a glimpse of villages far below in trees; a hawthorne hedge; a fir grove with rooks; wet pavements of London at night; the smell of things after a rain—of course he never even brushed the idea of sentiment; but sentiment was there. And a dozen times he professed a profane willingness to chuck the whole thing for ten minutes on Piccadilly.

Kingozi knew. Ten years before—but now, nothing. He knew no man in England well enough to tempt him across the street; he had no kin, and his memories—who knew Kingozi's memories?

“Look here,” he said abruptly, “I’m going on another ivory trek. One of M’Booley’s men reports elephant on the north fringe of the mountain. Why don’t you go along this time? It would do you good.”

But Trelawney shook his head.

"Who'll take over here in that case?" he asked.

Kingozi was tempted to reply that for a fortnight it was probable the Suka nation would manage to wobble along. It had been wobbling along for some time. Since the late Pleistocene, Kingozi thought. But he refrained. Few crimes are worse than weakening a man's faith in his job.

So Kingozi said nothing more, but at once set about preparations for his hunt. Every few months such reports had been brought in. Kingozi never failed to follow them up, and as he looked upon the slowly growing pile of tusks in the store hut he felicitated himself that his stay here was not entirely altruistic.

This evening he called on his familiar, Cazi Moto, for further information.

"Who are these people who have seen the elephant?" he asked.

"They are *shenzis*, forest people, *bwana*."

"They are here?"

"At your command, *bwana*."

Kingozi recognized the wiry little savages who shortly appeared as belonging to that wildest,

shyest, most primitive people, the Wanderobo of the great forests. Living widely scattered in hollow trees or logs, or in simple leaf huts; eating wild honey, uncultivated roots and fruits, and what small game they can destroy; without clothes, ornaments, comforts, or implements; they nevertheless possess, in common with the animals who are their peers and companions, an instinct for direction, a skill in tracking, a knowledge of beasts that is marvellous. Rarely do they permit themselves to become visible; but in some slow, patient, strange manner Kingozi had gained their confidence.

They stood before him, carrying their bows and arrows, almost naked, with few and poor ornaments, their primitive faces with the strong, prognathous jaws redeemed from utter savagery by their soft and liquid eyes.

Through Cazi Moto, who spoke some of their queer, fragmentary language, they conveyed what they had to say: the elephants had come, they were over yonder five hours, they were many. Saying which they relapsed into silence and waited.

II

SIMBA, son of M'Kuni, and member of the highly ornamental bodyguard of chiefs' sons which was part of Trelawney's policy of pacification, dwelt in one of the Government huts with his mates. The life he led was easy, and highly satisfactory. He had all the food he cared to eat, a warm place to sleep, and his natural instincts toward display were encouraged. It was desirable that the bodyguard should be impressed by its own importance so that it remain thoroughly satisfied with itself. That is why soldier's peace uniforms at least have always been gaudy. The more undesirable the service, *per se*, the gaudier the uniform. And it was furthermore desirable that those chiefs' sons should entertain a certain rivalry or emulation among themselves.

The son of M'Kuni came from rather a small and outlying village. He did not possess the wealth of some of his rivals. But his belongings were in apple pie order. His buffalo hide shield he kept well oiled and the heraldic pattern bright; his long-bladed spear twinkled in the sun; his

bead belt with the sword was cleaned daily; his ostrich face frame and headdress, by the addition of fresh feathers, were maintained at a high state of pulchritude; his anklets, armlets, and necklaces he kept polished with the leaves of *Kiuvi*. Besides he owned certain specialties—a pair of spats made of beads called *mithanga*; a horn snuff bottle craftily ornamented with copper rings; and especially a flat, circular ornament made of pelicoid shells which he wore on his forehead and called *ibuo*. These things were a source of great satisfaction to him.

His duties were light and pleasant. He turned out in full regalia at flag-raising time. He attended the Bwana M’Kuba on all his official errands. Occasionally, after winding his spear blade with red cloth, he went somewhere as messenger. These journeys took him to the villages round about, to neighbouring nations, and once in a great while over a ten days’ journey to the white man’s town where he saw many wonders. Everywhere he had a soul-satisfying opportunity to show off before less-favoured mortals. He was a fierce and imposing figure and he knew it; and he

greatly enjoyed the envious glances of the men, and the coy, bright-eyed scrutiny of the girls. And even in Nairobi itself he was conscious of being remarked by the white people.

Before coming to the *boma*, Simba would have considered all this the height of any reasonable man's ambitions. But now he was dissatisfied. There were greater heights to be scaled. As between Simba in all his savage and haughty glory, and little black, wizened Cazi Moto dressed in a khaki shirt (ragged), a pair of khaki "shorts" (ragged), and a pair of shoes, also ragged but indubitably white man's, no human being with an eye for the picturesque would have hesitated for a moment. Nevertheless Simba envied Cazi Moto, envied him with all his heart.

And when word came to him in the camp gossip that the *shenzis* were in with news of elephant, he did a bold thing. He sought out Kingozi, busy with preparation, and asked a personal interview.

The white man looked up from the little pile of duffle he was contemplating. His eye, cold and expressionless, swept the gorgeous figure

from head to foot. His jaw thrust forward aggressively the line of his beard.

"Well?" he demanded.

"Bwana," said Simba, "it has come to me that you go to fight the elephant. I ask you to take me."

"What for?" asked Kingozi bluntly.

"As gunbearer," said Simba.

Cazi Moto cackled, and the four veteran bearers, who had squatted listening to the colloquy, burst out laughing. Kingozi himself grinned.

"Gunbearer, eh?" he repeated, grimly amused. "What do you know of guns? Can you load one?"

"Yes, *bwana*."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Kingozi in some surprise. "Where did you learn that?"

"I have watched, *bwana*."

"How do you clean a gun?"

"First," said Simba, greatly heartened, "I get water, very hot, *katchemka sana*, and I pour it down the hole, slowly, slowly. And then I take a piece of cloth and I push it through with the stick; and another; and another until the last cloth is dry. And then I put the fat that is in the small bottle on another piece of cloth, and I push

that through the hole. And then I rub this cloth on the outside."

"And you learned this by watching?"

"Yes, *bwana*."

Kingozi arose from the ground and dropped into his canvas chair.

"This is interesting," he said to himself in English, as was his frequent custom. "Never knew a native to observe that closely. Now," he continued in Swahili, "have you also watched how one takes the skin from a head?"

"Yes, *bwana*."

"Tell me."

Simba did so in minute detail. He had even noticed a certain first incision in the back of the neck that was peculiar to Kingozi.

"Astonishing!" muttered the latter.

He continued to stare at the picturesque, brilliantly decorated savage before him, his jaw thrust forward, his steely eyes hard and uncompromising as was his habit.

"Listen," he said abruptly. "I know you well. You are that Simba whom I rubbed with the fat of the lion when you were a small boy. Therefore

you are brave. You have also knowledge of some things. But bravery and knowledge are not all of a gunbearer. A gunbearer must know many things you do not know. Also he must serve his white man better than he would serve himself, and he must know and carry out all the *distauri** of a gunbearer. To do this he must serve the white man for a long time."

"I wish to serve, *bwana*."

Kingozi barked out a short, contemptuous laugh.

"But a gunbearer! You are no more a gunbearer than a cub is a killer of the lion pack. Because you flap your arms, are you therefore an eagle?"

The attentive bystanders laughed. If Simba had been a white youth instead of a red-bronze youth, he would probably have blushed deeply. As it was he stared straight before him and his ostrich plumes quivered.

"What does a man do to become a gunbearer, *bwana*?" he asked.

"He serves the white man, and learns," replied

*The customs, as comprising also the traditions, loyalties, and ideals of any service.

Kingozi. "And if he learns well, and serves well, it may be that some time he gets a chance."

"Then I will serve, *bwana*."

"Will you, indeed!" commented Kingozi, in English. "Very well. To do so you must lay aside for always all these things," he indicated with a brief almost contemptuous gesture the shield, spear, barbaric ornaments of the splendid savage. "You will wear the blanket and clothes of a porter. You will carry a load on your head. You will receive *potio* as a porter, and meat when meat is shot. You will chop wood, carry water, make camp, do all the hard work that a porter must do. Whatever I tell you, that you must do. You will go where I go or where I tell you to go. You will be paid five rupees each month."

Simba listened attentively, his eyes unwavering. At the close of the speech he stepped forward, laid his spear and shield at Kingozi's feet, stripped the ostrich plume headdress from his head, added his war club, his bead belt, the bells he wore along his thighs, and was about to remove even the arm-lets and necklets, but Kingozi stopped him.

"*Bassi*," said he. "It is then agreed. Cazi

Moto, give this man a blanket, a jersey, a water bottle."

III

NEXT morning the hunting party entered the forest. It consisted of Kingozi, Cazi Moto, and the four porters, one of whom was Simba. The loads they carried were very light, not more than thirty pounds per man, and contained only the barest necessities for the roughest camping. The method of hunting the elephant in these forests was simplicity itself. The little party would follow on the track of an elephant throughout all the daylight hours. At night they would make a fireless camp, eat cold food, and lie down to sleep as well as they might until the following morning. Then they would resume the pursuit. Kingozi always allowed himself five days. If at the end of the fourth day he had not struck his quarry, he returned on the fifth to his base camp for rest and new supplies. Five days of that kind of labour was about all the human frame should be called upon to endure.

At the edge of the forest they were met by the

Wanderobo. These little naked hunters materialized suddenly and silently. There were now a dozen of them. Without formal greeting they gathered in a compact circle, making room for Kingozi and Cazi Moto, who squatted down with them. The four porters stood in the background.

Someone kindled a tiny fire. N'jahgi, the leader, in so far as such primitive savages could be said to have a leader, produced from a skin bag hung around his neck a chunk of dried elephant fat. This he deposited on the fire. When it blazed up, each number of the circle laid upon the flame a sacrifice. One cut several links from the iron chain he wore around his neck; another poured out a palmful of pungent stuff; a third donated a collection of apparently valueless pebbles and seeds which were undoubtedly cherished magic; and so on. Kingozi recognized that these apparently trivial things were in reality of great value to so simple and impoverished a people; and that by the extent of the sacrifice could be gauged their opinion of the seriousness of the occasion. When his turn came he laid upon the flames a very brilliant cotton handkerchief.

The N'jahgi arose to his feet and, with arms upstretched, addressed in turn each of the four points of the compass. He spoke in a language unknown to Kingozi, or indeed to Simba and his companions, but his deep earnestness lent to his utterances a solemnity. Then, plucking a branch from a near-by bush, he dipped it in the ashes of the dying fire, and with it struck gently thrice across Kingozi's face. The ceremony being thus finished, all arose and swiftly took up the trail into the forest.

Simba had never before carried a load: so it was as well that this was light. By way of counter balance, however, the track of the elephant led over a very rough country and through a very thick jungle. Only where the great beast had cleared a way would it have been possible for human beings to proceed at all. Up steep hills and down again; through streams; across jungles where the swinging vines, merely brushed aside by the animal's passage, caught at the loads like hands; then climbing again an almost perpendicular slope, and so into the bamboo forests where the cool-looking green stalks grew close and almost

as tall as the sky, and one saw only in the narrow tracks of elephants or down short vistas where grew deep, spongy green moss. And at night after a supper of cold *potio*, which is unappetizing, everyone, Kingozi included, wrapped up and lay down on the ground. It was very cold and there was no fire. The Wanderobo curled up together like so many dogs. The porters and Simba shivered miserably and were most unhappy. At dawn, stiff and weary, they were up and off again. Simba's neck ached, his lungs laboured, his legs hurt, but if he, or any of the porters, so much as scraped a log in passing, Cazi Moto hissed back a fierce warning.

For two days thus they followed the elephant's track. On the morning of the third day, after a plunge down from the bamboo into the forest country again, the elephant's tracks joined those of many more; and the whole band moved forward together, cutting a twenty-foot swath through the jungle as though a gigantic mowing machine had passed.

Shortly after they came within hearing of the elephants. Simba had never seen one of these

great beasts, and now he listened with something approaching awe to the thunder-like rumblings of digestion and the slow, deliberate crashings of the unseen monsters. They were evidently feeding on a forested side hill across a deep, cleft ravine.

After a short consultation the whole party moved forward again. Simba and his mates still carried the burdens, for until actually in touch with the game no man could tell where the chase might lead.

The next three hours were terrifying and humbling to Simba. At the end of them he wondered how he had ever in his ignorance dared raise his eyes to the position of gunbearer. They crept forward down the elephant trails; and almost immediately they were in the middle of the scattered herd. Kingozi kept lighting matches, shaking the flame from them, and watching anxiously where the imperceptible currents of air carried the resultant puffs of smoke. The Wanderobo disappeared noiselessly, and reappeared again one by one, and disappeared again. The party moved forward by inches, with infinite precautions. Beyond the

leafy screen that hemmed them in almost stifflingly they heard lazy, tremendous sounds.

Then suddenly one of the beasts screamed, and pandemonium broke loose. Great bodies rushed here and there; the tops of small trees shivered with shock; the rip of branches torn whole from the trunk followed by tremendous crashes resounded on all sides. And from all directions the trumpeting was continuous.

Kingozi stood still in the centre of a tiny opening. His bent figure had straightened tensely; his bearded lips had parted to show the gleam of teeth; his eyes shone. Close to his elbow crouched Cazi Moto, holding the second rifle. He, too, was taut as a coiled spring; his eyes also shone. The Wanderobo bent low and dove under the bush, worming their way out of sight. The row increased. Every few moments one or two of the little forest people would dart from the mysterious shadows as though the devil were behind them. Sometimes they were cruelly frightened. Their skins had turned ashen gray, their limbs trembled as with palsy, their eyes rolled in their heads, their teeth chattered so

they could hardly speak. It was evident that they had been very close to death. They ran to crouch at the white man's feet as terrified dogs might run for comfort to their masters. Nevertheless, after shivering for a few moments they apparently regained control of themselves, spoke a few low words to the attentive hunter, shook themselves, and dauntlessly plunged into the forest again. Simba's imagination was not overdeveloped, but he wondered if he could do that.

This lasted for a good half hour. Then they had to leave that spot. Without warning the green leaves parted and an elephant brushed into the opening. It loomed fairly over them. To Simba's terrified senses it seemed as tall as the forest trees and as massive as a kopje of the plains. Kingozi and Cazi Moto ducked low and ran, not away from the beast but angling back past it. The porters dropped their loads and scattered off into space. Simba clung to his load and followed his master. This was not bravery on his part. The other porters had been in like circumstances before and knew what to do. Simba

did not. Therefore he instinctively followed the white man. As to his retaining his load, that was sheer accident. He did not have enough unscared wit to let go.

The elephant trumpeted and crashed after the elusive porters. Kingozi and Cazi Moto at once halted. They seemed unperturbed.

"Small cow, *bwana*," remarked Cazi Moto.

After a moment they returned to the opening. Kingozi noticed Simba.

"Why did you keep your load?" he asked.

But Simba was spared the necessity of an embarrassing reply, for at that instant N'jahgi and another hunter ran up excitedly. N'jahgi plucked at Kingozi's sleeve, uttering excitedly a low-voiced word. At once all four, stooping low, disappeared.

A long wait ensued. Simba, chilly from excitement, shivered by the four loads. The forest was growing quieter. The elephants, vaguely disturbed by a presence they had not fully determined, were calming down. Then a short distance away the great elephant gun spoke. Once! twice! then two shots close together.

An instant's silence, and then a roar of sound. The former disturbance had been nothing. Simba, sitting on one of the loads, listened with awe. The herd had moved on down the ravine so he, personally, was well out of it. But the rending of wood, the crash of branches, the irresistible rush of bodies, the screaming, trumpeting, and yelling of the enraged and alarmed animals made of that lower ravine a cauldron of sound that seemed to Simba like the whirling abode of devils. And every few moments, from the very centre of it, boomed a gun. Behind the gun, Simba knew, was Cazi Moto, gunbearer!

Then without apparent reason the herd moved away. It could be heard smashing on down the ravine; the sounds rapidly becoming fainter until they ceased. A deep silence descended on the forest. Simba, left alone in this strange environment, wondered, awe stricken, whether all had been killed.

It seemed to him that he sat there minutes. As a matter of fact it was seconds only. Then a long, clear call sounded. Almost immediately the other three porters appeared very myster-

iously, picked up their loads, and set out in the direction of the call. Simba followed them.

They proceeded for perhaps a quarter mile, making their way through the wreck and devastation of the elephant stampede. Then they came upon a little group consisting of Kingozi, Cazi Moto, N'jahgi, and all his Wanderobo. Simba's incredulous eyes counted them. They were all there. Furthermore, they were sitting about chatting as though nothing had happened. Kingozi was leaning against a huge gray rock smoking his pipe. Then with a shock Simba realized that it was not a rock, but a dead elephant!

He set down his load and walked all around the huge animal, gazing with dumfounded astonishment at its proportions, its trunk, the gleam of its massive ivory. Of such a thing had Simba never dreamed. Kingozi was talking with Cazi Moto.

"This is a good bull, *bwana*, with good teeth."

"A good one," assented Kingozi. "The other is not much smaller. But I am not pleased that we had to kill the cow."

"If we had not killed the cow, the cow would have killed us. They were very many."

"That's true."

So there were two others! And these had of their own accord descended into the raging hell. Indeed this was a great master who fights the Elephant! Simba looked upon the hero, Cazi Moto, and admiration filled him; he looked upon Kingozi, the demi-god, and veneration flooded his whole being. Simba was a simple soul.

The tiny simple camp was made, and presently all set to work on the hard labour of cutting out the ivory. But first Kingozi permitted his men and the Wanderobo hunters to take their selection of the meat. Cazi Moto and his friends skinned bits from the inside of the trunks, and in addition laid aside for future reference huge chunks cut from along the backbone. The Wanderobo, however, had different ideas. They opened slits in the great beasts' bellies, and actually crawled inside the body cavities in search of especial tit-bits! After ten minutes they reappeared, somewhat soiled, but very happy.

Each then cut off as much more as he could carry of the coarser meat.

The job was finished none too soon. Appeared on the scene at a dog-trot an ancient shrivelled savage with a hyrax fur cap followed by three old women, his wives, and any quantity of miscellaneous ages of both sexes, his various descendants. These were one and all armed with the native soft iron sword-knives. The edges were both bad and temporary, and the elephant's meat tough, but they set to work with great diligence, being in on the ground floor. As fast as a chunk of meat was severed they laid it aside in a rapidly growing pile under a certain tree. There they knew it would be perfectly safe from theft.

Their business-like diligence was shortly explained by the arrival of more and yet more natives. They appeared from all directions, swiftly and silently. How they had received the news, who shall say? The transmittal of detailed intelligence over incredible distances, in the briefest time, through unpopulated country, is one of the mysteries of Africa. But there they were,

hundreds of them, all as busy as bees. And, unbelievable as it may seem, by the time darkness had fallen the three great carcasses had been stripped of everything edible. In the aisles of the forest, beneath the cozy shelter of the lower jungle, gleamed a hundred little fires. The smell of roasting meat was in the air. A happy chatter was going up everywhere. On the under side of leaves and against the trunks of trees cross shadows, cross lights were carrying on a mad jolly revel of their own. In the depths of the forest, as always, the tree hyraxes screamed like devils.

Before the larger fire built by the porters Simba reclined. His happiness was nearly complete. Tall, grill-like racks supported strips of meat at just the right distance for the inauguration of the process of making biltong. Switches nearer the blaze impaled tit-bits of roasting meat. A *suffuria* with *potio* and still more meat boiled furiously. His companions were swapping boastful or wonderful stories, as is porter custom, and through them Simba envisaged wonderful far countries, mighty deeds. Although naturally they retained the lofty superiority of the travelled

over the stay-at-home, still he felt that they had apparently accepted him as one of themselves. His neck muscles had recovered from the carrying of the load. Across the eddying smoke, at another fire, he could see dimly his idol, gravely smoking his pipe and gazing into the coals, occasionally exchanging a word with Cazi Moto. In the background lay the gleaming tusks of ivory—tangible evidence of triumph. Simba's heart swelled as he thought of the triumphant return.

Only one fly in the ointment. Simba felt cruelly his lack of clothes. No, gentle reader, he was not cold, nor overtaken with hitherto unknown modesty. But magnificent as were his wire jewellery, his ear ornaments, his beadwork, they marked him indubitably as a temporary porter, as a *shenzi*. Mightily he longed for the nondescript conglomeration of white man's cast-offs that make every *safari* so closely resemble a rummage sale. He had no means of acquiring such valuables. Then like a flash he remembered Kingozi's promise of five rupees a month! For the first time in his life Simba realized the use of

and the desire for money. He turned to his neighbour and began to bargain. But though the use and desire of money were thus revealed, the value was not; so Simba was utterly done in the eye by the astute barbarian. Nevertheless, he became possessed of a pair of ragged "shorts" and the wreck of a military tunic too small for him. (The vendor philosophically went naked until the *boma* was reached.) The price was exorbitant, but even later sophistication failed to make Simba even regret his bargain.

IV

THE triumphal return to the *boma* had taken place. That hour was brief but glorious. Each regular porter carried a tusk, its hollow filled with damp mud to preserve it, leaving to casual *shenzis* impressed for the purpose the transportation of the cow ivory and the scanty camp equipment. Everybody turned out to see them. Simba gazed with pitying contempt on his late comrades-in-arms.

"Good luck," Kingozi answered Trelawney's question. "Got four bull tusks that will average

about eighty pounds. Had to shoot a cow, I'm sorry to say. She was fairly on top of me. Have to report her into the Commissioner, I suppose. She had nice ivory—about fifteen pounds apiece, I should judge. But you don't care a hang for all that. I can see you have something on your mind. Let's have it before you burst."

"Oh, I say," protested Trelawney. "Of course I'm interested, no end!"

But he required little more urging.

"I've been mulling it over," he announced with triumph, "and I have the solution."

"You mean civilizing the savages, voluntary labour, and all the rest?"

"Yes."

"What is it?" asked Kingozi, filling his pipe.

"A tax—payable only in cash," explained Trelawney. "No—wait until I have finished—I know just what you're going to say. It won't be a tax on individuals, or products, or anything of that sort. I know perfectly well it would be impossible to get any just census of all that. But this will be a tax for every hut! What do you think of that?"

"Splendid!" said Kingozi. "Go on."

"You see I can get track of the huts; and I'll levy an annual tax of, say, three rupees. Not much, but somebody will have to work long enough to get it. And I shall insist on payment in cash!"

"And since you have the only supply of rupees in the whole district," supplemented Kingozi. "They'll have to work for you."

"Precisely!" cried Trelawney, his face glowing.

"Suppose they refuse to pay the tax?"

Trelawney stiffened.

"In that case I should of course be prepared to take proper measures," he replied.

Kingozi choked badly over his pipe, and finally coughed his way outdoors. There he ran like a deer, until at a safe distance he laughed until the tears trickled over his great beard. Cazi Moto came there upon him.

"There is good news, *bwana*," he ventured.

"Cazi Moto," said Kingozi impressively, "wonderful beyond the powers of expression are the byways of conscience and the human soul. Here is a youth whose whole being revolts against the

idea of forced labour. He wouldn't think of it! Not he! The very notion is abhorrent." Kingozi laughed again. Cazi Moto joined respectfully: though as Kingozi's remarks were all in English, his sympathy was affectionate but unintelligent. "But he's willing to 'take proper measures' to make them give him what they can get from him only by labour. And in the end he's still got the money—and the labour! Oh, fine! Shall I tell him that, Cazi Moto? Never! I approve of the whole show. But you must acknowledge it's funny!"

"*N'dio, bwana*," said Cazi Moto; which is a good shot-gun reply, like the French *je crois*.

Trelawney went at his new scheme whole heartedly, with a fine eye for detail. He sent out the sublimated errand boys, that Kingozi called the "King's Guard," with instructions to count carefully the houses in each village, bringing back one stick for each house. He himself rode here and there, checking at random the count. After this was completed he called in each village a little *shauri* to explain the new system; and after they were all finished a grand *shauri* at the *boma* for the

same purpose. It took hours of talk to explain the idea to Trelawney's satisfaction. The simple Suka grasped it in five minutes. It was another *hong*a or tax. They were accustomed to *hong*as from ancient times. The phrase "payable in rupees only" did not impress them at that moment. Gradually it dawned on Trelawney himself that human problems are never miraculously solved by mere legislative enactment. The slow, tedious "campaign for education" to make it effective was yet to come. Therefore he terminated the *shauri* with a few appropriate remarks.

He returned to his tea rather thoughtfully.

"I think I've made a good start," he told Kingozi, "but a great deal remains to be done. They don't realize yet. I've been thinking. I must name a fairly early date for payment; bring considerable pressure to bear; and they, when they can't pay—as of course they can't—give them a well-understood extension of one month—or two——"

He sipped at his tea, his forehead wrinkled with deep thought. The savages who had attended the *shauri* were only slowly leaving the *boma*.

There was the sound of chattering, of loud laughter. Some were making their way to the *dukka* of Mahrads, the Indian. Then a cry arose of warning—*angalia ! angalia !* The crowd parted, and two of Trelawney's splendid messengers were seen coming along at a dog trot. They were in full panoply, and one held straight before him, as a crusader might carry a cross, a split stick in whose cleft letters had been bound.

There proved to be two of these, and both official. He read them shortly with darkening brow and kindling eye.

"Of all the damned impudence!" he cried at last.

"What is it?" asked Kingozi; who, by the way, already knew perfectly.

"They've laid me off for a six months' vacation!" cried Trelawney, "and have appointed Barrows to take my place!"

"Congratulations," said Kingozi, "now you can take your trip to England you've wanted so badly."

"Trip to England be damned!" Trelawney vociferated, his calm completely shattered. "There's my hut tax!"

He darted into the house. At the end of ten minutes he returned, a sheet of closely written paper in his hand.

"What have you done?" asked Kingozi.

"I've told 'em I simply can't go," replied Trelawney. "I've told them to recall Barrows. How can I leave my people?"

Kingozi arose, and laid his hand on the young fellow's shoulder.

"I'll take your letter out," he said, "and I'll try to arrange it. I think I can. Let Barrows come in. He'll make you a good assistant, and will more than take my place as company."

"You're not coming back?" said Trelawney blankly.

"I'm overdue now, son, I'm beginning to believe."

V

TEN days later Kingozi's *safari* marched into town. He had some fifteen or twenty of the Sukas carrying ivory and a half-dozen regular porters bearing his simple personal effects. Among the latter was Simba. He wore his blanket turban-

wise in approved fashion; and most of the rest of his figure was covered by a greatcoat. This garment had originally been built for English winters. Its first owner had worn it as far as Port Said, and then had laid it aside. He used it as a night cover on the journey from Mombasa to Nairobi, then became thoroughly disgusted with its woolly stuffiness and gave it to his personal boy. Thenceforward its vicissitudes were many; and it showed all of them in its appearance. Simba obtained it from Mahrad at an extortionate price in *m'wembe*. It was very uncomfortable but very honourable. He entered town jauntily, carrying his sixty-pound load like a veteran, and his pride was as the pride of an army with banners.

Kingozi went at once to Government House.

"Here," said he to the Governor, "is an epistle from your Commissioner among the Sukas, probably indignant and perhaps insulting, telling you he doesn't want any vacation and telling you to take back your Barrows and throw him in the Indian Ocean."

"But I thought he wanted a vacation!"

"So did he think so. But now when it came to a decision he talked of the impossibility of leaving 'my people'! So I realized I wasn't needed any longer. Here I am."

"There's no use trying to tell you how we appreciate what you've done; but I want you to understand that we realize fully. It's no light matter, pacifying and bringing under Government a hostile tribe with a handful of men. You think Trelawney's safe to leave?"

Kingozi laughed.

"As a matter of fact, he's been safe to leave for a year past. I've been hanging on after my time. It was a terrible wrench to leave when I did. It wasn't love of King or Country that kept me there, I assure you."

"Plenty of ivory?" suggested the Governor.

"A little. But hard and dangerous hunting. It wasn't that."

"No? What then?"

"I was just plain fond of the young scoundrel," said Kingozi.

CHAPTER VI

THE GUNBEARER

SIMBA, son of M'Kuni, spurred by ambition, came out of the jungle at the tail of Kingozi, the white man's *safari*. Because he had laid aside his gorgeous panoply of savagery, because he had acquired some sketchy, ragged, and disreputable white man's garments, and because he had carried a load ten days over a beaten track, he considered himself a full-fledged porter. In this he found that he had deceived himself.

For some reason or another he had imagined himself tied to Kingozi for life. Instead he joined a queue of those awaiting. When his turn came, he received five rupees in silver, was told briefly to keep Cazi Moto, the headman, informed of his whereabouts and that he would receive employment at the next opportunity, and was turned loose to shift for himself. It

was rather bewildering. By natural gravitation he finally landed at the native village just outside the town. There he made friends, and found a sleeping place. But in some mysterious manner his five rupees had vanished without adequate return. This annoyed Simba, but did not greatly disturb him. But after three days of blithesome eating from the nearest pot, he received the astonishing information that such things were not gratis. If he would eat, he must pay. As Simba's total assets consisted of a partial outfit of decrepit khaki, a disreputable greatcoat, a cunningly contrived oryx horn trumpet, and a few tribal knickknacks, he for the first time understood the meaning of economic pressure. And rupees took on desirability.

How get more rupees? He had no idea. Therefore he hied himself away; and, as many before him had done, he sought the low, single-storied hotel and the white man's wisdom.

This hotel stood a little back from the street, which was marked by a white picket fence. Inside that fence no native must venture save on

business. Outside it stood innumerable rickshaws ready to swoop in clouds should one of the loungers on the cool dark veranda show the slightest inclination to fare forth. The bullet-headed Kavirondo rickshaw boys chattered and yelled. An unending procession streamed past—savages, women bearing burdens of firewood, local dandies in snow-white *kanzuas*, Europeans. Simba immediately learned by vehement appraisal the rule as to the white picket fence. For the rest of the day he stood wistfully outside, like a dog, hoping that the white man might feel inclined for a stroll. He could see Kingozi plainly, lounging in a teakwood lazy chair. But Kingozi, fresh to civilization after a long sojourn in the wilderness, did not seem inclined to stir. Simba begged a meal, and early the following morning was back at his post.

Again no luck. At last, toward noon, he took his courage in his hands, and waiting until the Swahili major-domo had turned his back, ventured into the sacred precincts. He was almost immediately detected and pounced upon. In despair he called loudly on Kingozi. The latter

looked at him attentively, then motioned the zealous and scandalized official one side.

"Well?" he asked Simba.

"I wish to eat, *bwana*."

"Why don't you?"

"I have no food. And to get food I must have white man's money. And to get white man's money I must carry a load on *safari*."

"That is very true," said Kingozi, a grim amusement twinkling in his eyes. "With five rupees one can buy much food—food to last three, four moons. Where are the five rupees I gave you?"

"*Bwana*," offered Simba, "I did not know one must have rupees to give for food. So I played the game with holes called *bau*, and my rupees are gone."

"I see," remarked Kingozi; "what would you have me do?"

"Do you not go on *safari*?"

"No."

Simba looked perplexed and a little disheartened.

"From here to the villages of your people is

only an eight-day walk. The people on the road will feed you. Why do you not return to your villages?"

"That I do not wish to do, *bwana*."

"Why not?"

"In that way I can never become a gunbearer."

"So that bee is still buzzing in your bonnet, is it?" muttered Kingozi in English. "Well, I do admire pluck. Go to Ali, the Somali," he instructed Simba, "and say to him that I am sending you and that he is to give you *potio*; and that on the first *safari* where porters are needed he is to send you out. He will give you *potio*, and from the first rupees of your *safari* he will take his pay. *Bassi!*"

Simba reported to Ali, the Somali, a tall, slender, aristocratic efficient man who recruited for whatever expeditions might be setting forth. Each afternoon thereafter Simba received a miserable pound and a half of *potio* which Ali entered against him in a little blank book full of Arabic characters. Most of the sunny hours he loafed against Ali's go-down, waiting in company with other and merry spendthrifts the godsend of

employment. The rest of the time he wandered up and down the fascinating bazaars, or made acquaintance with the varied life of the place. He learned in company with older well-known porters the meaning of credit, and from his own efforts in the direction of getting some the value of reputation in obtaining it. He learned how quickly the smiles fade from the faces of the bazaar girls once his financial status became clear. He gazed upon lordly gunbearers, Cazi Moto among them, sitting on real chairs beneath the veranda roof of Suleimani the Blind, drinking real tea, and the suffering of acute envy entered his soul. He bumped his head hard against arbitrary authority when engaged in the most innocent of enterprises as when he curled himself comfortably for the night in the hotel bathtub, an admirable retreat discovered quite by accident. In short, though he did not know it, Simba was becoming civilized.

Then one day Ali emerged from the go-down, looked appraisingly at the men waiting in the sun, beckoned to a number of them. Simba was one of those called.

He found himself furnished with a canteen, a light jersey, a cotton blanket of satisfactory red, a stout thin cord, and a bag for *potio*. He was assigned to a mess of five, and the mess further acquired a tiny cotton tent only a trifle larger than a dog kennel and a metal cooking pot called a *sufuria*. When the loads were laid out in a row and assigned, Simba drew a sack of *potio*. One of the older porters showed him how to bind on sticks in such a manner as to stiffen this exceedingly floppy sort of load.

This *safari* was gone four months. It was in charge of two white men who might have been in Australia for all Simba had to do with them. Between himself and these august personages intervened an autocracy of gunbearers, personal boys, and headman. Simba was but one of a multitude. He carried his load, and as he was by nature strong, he carried it well to the front of each day's march. This being remarked by the vigilant headman, he was promoted to a tent load. It was important that the *bwanas'* tent should arrive among the first; while there was no hurry about a stray load of *potio*. This tent load

was rather awkward to carry, but it was a great honour. It raised Simba at once to the aristocracy of the porters. He looked with contempt on the miserable *kikuyus* who invariably brought up the rear. He had acquired a cheap pipe and a swagger. At one bound he had reached the top rank of that particular profession. As yet he did not realize that the qualifications for the top rank were merely a strong neck and a reasonable determination to keep up with the procession.

When camp was reached Simba had to assist in pitching the tent; he helped unfold the cots and chairs. Occasionally, but not very often, he was required to bring in wood, or to go with the white men after meat. The latter occupation was entertaining and profitable. It furnished both amusement and the chance of tucking away under one's jersey some tit-bit from the slain animal.

After these duties were finished Simba was free. He joined his friends about the fire where steamed the *sufuria*. There he luxuriated in warmth, food, and nakedness. Like all the other porters, during the heat of the day and beneath a sixty-pound load Simba wore every

garment he possessed, including the heavy winter overcoat; but when night's coolness fell he stripped to the skin. By the fire he swapped tremendous tales, sang to himself in a weird minor falsetto, dipped into the *sufuria*, and generally gloried in himself. About as he was getting rested and interested one of the white men yelled "*Kalele!*" from his tent. Then everybody had to keep quiet. Simba would not have traded his life for the old savage days. Already he looked upon the *shenzis* as immeasurably beneath him.

This trip was not a hard one. They moved camp ten or twelve miles every few days, and then the two white men performed mysterious magic with various instruments on three legs. Sometimes Simba had to carry one of these instruments. It was not heavy; not much heavier than a gun. As Simba was, like all natives, much of a small boy at heart, he pretended it was a gun. For this reason he took especial care of the thing. After a time the white men, noting the care though ignorant of the reason for it, instructed the headman that Simba must hereafter always be included in the surveying parties. Occasionally,

after the tripod was set up, Simba was handed a bona-fide gun to hold. Those were great moments.

The consequence of all this was that Simba returned to Nairobi considerably advanced. He had become accustomed to carrying a full load and had learned the porters' tricks of easing himself under his burden; he had absorbed camp routine; and he had attracted sufficient attention to himself so that when the men were paid off he received a few words of commendation and two extra rupees by way of *baksheeshi*.

After ascertaining that Kingozi was away in the land of the *Inglishi*, Simba proceeded to acquire knowledge of the purchasing power of a *pesi*, the market value of bazaar goods, the exhilarating properties of *tembo*, the remarkable friendliness of bazaar girls, and the evanescence of great riches. For the twenty-two rupees, that Simba had vaguely looked upon as provision to late middle age at least, miraculously vanished in about two weeks. And Simba still a young man!

No help for it! Back to Ali, the Somali, and the bread line!

For his next employment, fortunately, he had

to wait only about a week. It is doubtful whether lacking Kingozi's renewed endorsement Ali the Somali would long have advanced *potio* to a comparatively unknown man. Then Simba would have been thrown on the cold world in good truth!

This *safari* was a one-man affair. It lasted three terrible months on every day of which a march was made. The route was through a desert country where often water was scarce. Some days' journeys had to be ten, twelve, even fourteen miles long. Men straggled, gave out under the sun. Other men had to be sent back from camp, often late at night, to succour them with water and to help carry in their loads. The fever was bad. Rhinoceros were numerous, and Simba learned to jump for the thorn trees at the first snort of the outrageous beasts. Great stretches of country were unpopulated; and often the *potio* supply fell so low that the men were on half rations. There was plenty of grumbling, plenty of sickness, considerable flogging. The white man was grim, implacable, and unapproachable. Nobody entertained for him the slightest

affection; yet he was just, efficient and possessed great driving force. Many times Simba wished himself safely back in the old idle life. He wondered why he had ever left it. The ease of the previous *safari* faded from his memory; the delights of rupees and the bazaar grew dim. He made up his mind that if he ever got out of this he would stay out. Most of the other porters were making the same resolve. In that they did not differ from Simba. But there was this difference: whereas they became slack and neglectful as a result of the resolves, Simba continued to do his work well. And when volunteers were called upon to go back in the darkness for the weaklings who had fallen behind, Simba always stepped forward. Why? It would be impossible to say. Certainly from no excess of moral virtue. Perhaps the ascendancy of the white man had got into his blood, so that even here the childlike desire to "show off" had its force; or perhaps it was the difference in moral fibre that everywhere in the world separates the individual from the herd.

In any case, when at last the battered, gaunt, wearied caravan dropped its loads before Ali's

go-down, and the men lined up before the table to receive their wages, the white man, hard but just as ever, detained Simba.

"Ali," said he crisply to the Somali, "this is a good man. Remember him. He is the best of my porters." And then to Simba, "I have been pleased with you. Here is *baksheeshi m'kubwa*, and in addition you may have my canvas coat. Come to the hotel for it."

Simba found himself possessed of twenty-five rupees—for three months, mind you. A moment before he had hated this white man, and he had entertained a profound determination to eschew all white man's works. Now he walked away with his head in the air. He felt quite the grandest of created things for about five minutes; or until he came within eye range of the stone veranda of Suleimani the Blind. Then when he saw the headman and gunbearers sitting in genuine chairs and drinking bona-fide tea, his pride fell. For an envious minute he stared at this remote and haughty gathering. As he turned away he registered in his heart the native equivalent for "Pike's Peak or Bust."

II

OWING to the fact that Simba had been especially recommended to Ali by his last employer, he did not wait long for his next job. In fact, but two days had passed when the Somali summoned him. As Simba had most of his rupees still remaining he objected strongly. But Ali would not listen.

"This is the son of a king," he said, "and it is a mighty *safari*. You must go."

So Simba went, and found himself an insignificant unit in the multitude.

For once Ali had not exaggerated. It was in reality the son of a king, indeed a crown prince whose habitat must be concealed under the general term "of foreign extraction." He had come to Africa for a big-game shoot in the furtherance of which he brought with him a valet, a physician, two assorted equerrys in waiting or some such creature, a whole battery of firearms, three full cases of ammunition, over fifty "chop boxes" containing food and drink, an even dozen tin uniform cases, and two lap-dogs in baskets. The

crown prince was not a bad sort of a chap, but he did not know any better; and he failed to realize that here was his one God-given chance for simplicity in a stifled life. He was met at the steamship by a delegation. He came up the Uganda Railway by private train. He was made much of at Government House and elsewhere. And finally he took the field on the best horse yet imported into a horseless land. He was followed by three hundred porters, twenty *askaris* or native troops, the staff, and six ox-wagons carrying three thousand pounds apiece. Each evening he ate and drank through a regular course dinner with appropriate wines. People called him Your Highness and backed away from him. The two capable Englishmen who had the show in charge toiled and sweated to keep the caravan running smoothly. They were old Afrikanders and did not like it; but they were very well paid and they did their job. Camp was an imposing sight, what with the big tent, and the medium-sized tents, and all the little tents, and the innumerable fires, and the royal standard flopping lazily in the evening breeze. And on the march it extended in a long

line miles across the country. The white men rode in advance; the personal staff trudged immediately behind; the porters howled and sang and blew horns and beat their loads with their *safari*-sticks; the ox-wagons creaked lumberingly and bumpily; the *askaris* marched very straight; the various headmen ran back and forth waving their *kibokos*, and the people of the country stared their eyes out. I tell you it was something to belong to such a regal and splendiferous show; even if you were only an unremarked one of three hundred!

The only elements of the universe unimpressed were the wild animals. Apparently they did not care a picayune whether the individual rather awkwardly attempting an approach was a royalty or an ordinary citizen. And as the Crown Prince had been accustomed all his life to instant deference, this annoyed him. He seemed to think that common respect would cause these beasts to hold still to be killed. And as the success of the expedition was in the responsibility of the two hard-worked Afrikanders, they, too, were anxious and annoyed.

But the drawbacks to perfect happiness did not affect Simba in the least. For the first time he enjoyed to the full all the advantages of a porter's life. The marches were short; the country was easy (never do to take any chances with royalty); the camping places were known in advance; the camp work was practically *nil* with so many to share it; the food and the equipment were magnificent and unaccustomed; and the prestige of belonging to such an aggregation gave him among the tribes through which the route lay a standing thoroughly satisfying to the heart. Simba wallowed in ease, luxury, and vaingloriousness.

The unwieldy procession made its way to the south, passing the Thirst indifferently because of huge especial water tanks, arriving at last in a country of game so unsophisticated that not only did it know nothing about royalty, but its ideas as to firearms were negligible. As soon as the two Englishmen persuaded their charge to quit fussing with patent adjustable telescopic sights and similar complicated sportsman inventions made especially for crown princes and other wealthy greenhorns, his Royal Highness began to have some

success. And every time he killed anything he especially wanted, he distributed *baksheeshi* or gave a feast.

One evening the runners who regularly brought in the royal mail happened to drift to the camp-fire by which Simba lay. They had all the latest news from Nairobi, and were therefore always welcome to hospitality. Among other things one of them said:

“Kingozi, the man who fights the elephant, has come back from the land of the *Inglishi*, and he collects a *safari*.”

That night Simba made a little bundle of his effects and of some food, and stole out of camp. This was a dangerous thing to do, as Simba well knew. The lions and other beasts, attracted by the frequent kills necessary to feed so large a multitude, had gathered in numbers. Simba proceeded as rapidly as he could for a mile or so; then, with a sigh of relief, climbed a tree. At first streak of dawn he was down and away.

It took Simba nine days to get to Nairobi. The country through which he had to pass was barren, and the water holes infrequent. In

addition the Masai, who inhabited it, would have been delighted to have speared Simba on sight. Even for one so recently emerged from savagery, it was a notable feat. Nevertheless, Simba arrived somewhat gaunt, scratched, and sleepless. To his relief he found that Kingozi's *safari* had not yet departed.

At the go-down of Ali the Somali he found the white man superintending the packing of his outfit. Simba offered himself.

But at that moment Ali came up, recognized him, and proffered the natural question of what he was doing there. Simba, being as yet a guileless soul, told the truth. He had been with the *safari* of that king: it was an easy *safari*; but he had heard that Kingozi was to make a journey: he preferred to go with Kingozi.

He finished to meet a disconcerting stare. Kingozi seemed more aloof, more uncompromising, more terrible than ever. And yet in the depths of his eyes was kindly interest too.

"Pay attention, Simba," he said. "You have told me that you wanted to be a gunbearer. That is so?"

"Yes, *bwana*," cried Simba, his heart leaping. He saw himself promoted in recognition of his devotion.

"And I have told you that there were many things a gunbearer must learn. One of them is that he must never leave his white man."

"No, *bwana*," agreed Simba cheerfully.

"You have 'left your white man!" accused Kingozi sharply.

But Simba's logic was still undisturbed.

"He is not my white man. You are my white man," he said.

However, Kingozi soon crushed that notion. He delivered the obvious elementary homily on loyalty to an undertaking. Simba understood at last.

"And now," commanded Kingozi in conclusion. "You must go back to that *safari*, at once; the way you came. You must go to the headman and you must eat *kiboko*. If you do not do this thing, then never must you come to me again."

"But, *bwana*, when this *safari* returns, then you will be away on your journey!" wailed Simba.

"That is true," said Kingozi.

"It will be a long journey?" ventured Simba hopefully.

"Very long," replied Kingozi uncompromisingly.

The hope died.

Simba stood silent for some moments, then he stooped and picked up his bundle.

"*Qua heri, bwana*," he said dispiritedly.

Without further words he turned away.

Kingozi called Cazi Moto to his side.

"Follow that young man and see what he does," he commanded.

Cazi Moto returned within the half hour.

"Well?" asked Kingozi.

"He went first to the bazaar," reported Cazi Moto. "He had money. There he bought meal, dried meat, and tobacco."

"And then?"

"Then he took the road to N'Gong, to the country of the Masai."

III

SIMBA had another devil of a trip back. It is no light task to make one's way alone and unarmed

through a dry country full of hostile men and dangerous beasts. Especially is this true when the heart burns with hurt resentment. You have seen a dog commanded to return home by a master bound for places where dogs are undesired? He goes, but he wonders why. Simba went but he wondered why. And he was so hurt and angry that he was not very far from caring whether he got caught or not. Still he was not so far gone as to omit precautions! He made five days of his journey, then had the good luck to fall in with Government runners. They were safe. At first they refused to have anything to do with Simba; but when they found that he, too, was headed for the encampment of the *kingi*, they grudgingly allowed him to join them—provided he kept up. And then they set a stiff pace just to test that. Simba kept up. Not for nothing had he served his apprenticeship as Trelawney's guard among the Suka. When Trelawney had sent a message he had expected speed.

Arrived at the encampment Simba reported to his mess, and was promptly taken in charge by the headman of his division. The crime was

heinous, so in due time he appeared before one of the white men. The latter, exceedingly wearied in spirit by the constant small annoyances incidental to such an unwieldy outfit, listened just long enough to understand the charge, recognized it as one of the temporary desertions so common among *safari* men, made no attempt to probe further, ordered twenty-five *kiboko*, and passed on to the next trouble.

Simba had never before taken punishment. He had seen it, however, and knew what was expected of him. He underwent the flogging without making a sound, and when it was finished sprang to his feet with a grin and a yell. Thereby he gained the respect of the attentive bystanders and of the *askari* who had laid on; for twenty-five is no light punishment. Sore in body and spirit Simba returned to his mess and resumed his duties.

The savour had gone out of this expedition. Simba hated every man of the lot, from his Royal Highness down to the cook's *toto*. He looked with bitter and sneering satisfaction on the rather blundering sportsmanship. He gained no com-

fort from the easy life, the abundant food, the hilarious association with the picked men of his profession. Among the rank and file, of course, was no intimation of how long the expedition was to last, nor whither its itinerary would lead. Simba counted the days grudgingly; resented each mile of progress forward; rejoiced mightily when, as happened several times, the route bent back on an apparent return. And each time the ensuing disappointment rendered him more fiercely sullen. He was not a popular companion. Indeed there is no saying that he might not have become a quarrelsome, even a dangerous companion, had not His Highness—through aid tacitly ignored of a hatful of cartridges expended by his white hunters—at last decided that he was satisfied. The *safari* turned back.

The return to Nairobi seemed interminable but at last it was accomplished. Simba's first act after receiving his rupees was to inquire after Kingozi. He learned that the Fighter of Elephants, at the head of thirty men only, had three weeks previously started northwest. Nobody knew where he was bound or when he would re-

turn. Then and there Simba came to a resolve. He took his rupees, including those still left over from his former expedition, and with them called upon Ali, the Somali.

"Here," he said to Ali, "are forty-nine rupees and sixteen *pesi*. If I keep them they will not last long; I shall play the game with holes, or I shall spend them in the bazaar. Do you keep them for me; and each week when I come to you, do you give me fifty *pesi* only. In that manner I may live on my rupees for a long time."

Ali's thin, expressive face was bent on him in amused comprehension.

"That shall be done," he agreed, taking the money. "Soon I will have another *safari* for you."

"I shall not go on another *safari* until Bwana Kingozi returns," stated Simba with decision, "for thus once again will I miss going with his *safari*."

Ali laughed aloud.

"Nevertheless," he said deliberately, "after three days' repose you will come here and I will give you one load of trade goods. This you and another man who knows the way will carry to the

camp of a *bwana* who is seven days' march away."

"I shall not do this," said Simba sullenly.

"You will do it," insisted Ali with calm. "Otherwise you may return to your *shenzis*, for never will you go on *safari* again, neither that of Bwana Kingozi nor of anyone else."

Simba chewed the cud of this bitterly.

"This is only to carry the load to the white man?" he asked at length, "then I may return immediately?"

"If you care to do so, you may return at once," Ali assured him.

Simba heaved a deep sigh.

"*I zuzu !*" he assented.

Ali's face wrinkled in a smile.

"That is well; there is much *baksheeshi*," he said, "the *bwana* has arranged it."

Two days later Simba started out with the one load of trade goods and the other man. The latter proved to be a silent, uncommunicative creature. He not only refused to indicate the route or the destination, but he declined to talk at all. He might be dumb. After fifty friendly attempts

Simba became disgusted and himself relapsed into unbroken silence. It was all of a piece with the same disheartening business. The world was sombre with annoyance and bad luck. He made his marches doggedly, his camps resentfully. As to the country, he paid attention in view of his return journey alone—which he resolved would be very promptly undertaken. They took turns carrying the load.

Because of his frame of mind, Simba was not inclined to permit of much lingering on the road. He wanted to get this over with as soon as possible: and he made up his mind that, once back in the bazaars, Ali would have very little to say as to his future movements. Ordinarily unsupervised natives on such an errand as this take their own good time to it. Through a peaceable country they proceed just as slowly as they dare, making sociable visits on the way, stopping with friends. But this dour pair travelled at express rate.

As a consequence, the afternoon of the fifth day found them surmounting a long low ridge from which was visible the meandering line of green

that marked out a water course through a thorny and arid land. Simba's companion stopped and pointed to irregularly placed dots of white.

"*Campi ya bwana*," he announced.

They descended the rocky slope, crossed the bottom land, and so came to the tents. Simba looked them over with but slight interest. He saw that it was a small *safari*. However, the details were to him a matter of profound indifference. He intended to get out of that just as soon as he could.

It happened to be his turn to carry the load. With the idea of getting the whole thing over at once, he made his way directly to the green double tent of the white man. Its owner was seated in front beneath the fly. Simba could make out his legs. He carried the load around to the entrance, eased it to the ground, and looked up sullenly to meet Kingozi's amused eyes.

"*Bwana!*" gasped Simba; and remained staring.

"*Jambo*, Simba," greeted Kingozi. "So you have come. That means that you have faithfully performed your *cazi* with the great bwana; for

I commanded Ali that only if you returned to that *safari* and did your duty well were you to be sent on to me."

Simba's dazed eyes turned. He saw his late travelling companion grinning at his elbow. He saw his old envy, Cazi Moto, in the background likewise grinning. He looked down at the load he had carried.

"Open it," commanded Kingozi.

Simba, still dazed, fumblingly undid the cords. On top of a number of packages lay a complete khaki uniform, a new hat, a leather belt, a shiny new knife, a sharpening stone in a sheath, blue spiral puttees, a felt-covered water bottle, and a magnificent genuine three-rupee blanket. Kingozi was speaking:

"Ali told you that you could return after bringing in this load. Do you wish to do so, or do you wish to join my *safari*?"

"Let me stay with you, *bwana*."

"Very well," said Kingozi, a very kindly smile illuminating his ordinarily grave countenance. "In that case take these things lying before you. They are yours."

"Mine, *bwana*?" repeated Simba wonderingly. There must be some mistake. These were of a magnificence beyond the hope of any one but a Cazi Moto.

"Yours," said Kingozi. He reached back his hand, and Cazi Moto laid in it the light rifle of everyday shooting. Kingozi in turn held it out to Simba. "Clean this carefully," he said casually. "It has been shot to-day. The cleaning things are in your tent."

Simba took the weapon reverently. Even yet he did not understand.

"I have made Cazi Moto the headman of all my affairs," said Kingozi, seeing this. "Hereafter you shall be my gunbearer."

Late that evening the deep silence that Kingozi's command of *kalele* had imposed upon the camp was broken by a high, wavering falsetto of joyous song. It was suddenly hushed by Kingozi's stern summons. Cazi Moto glided to the tent.

"Who dared disobey my order?" demanded Kingozi.

"It was Simba who said he forgot," replied Cazi Moto. "Shall he be punished?"

"What do you think, Cazi Moto?" asked Kingozi.

"I think he is very young and his heart is happy," replied little wizened old Cazi Moto.

"I think, so, too," said Kingozi with a sigh.

CHAPTER VII

MUTUAL RESPECT

SIMBA, gunbearer to Kingozi—the Master with the Beard, alias the Fighter of Elephants, alias John Culbertson—sat taking his ease on the veranda of the inn belonging to that Somali publican known as Suleimani the Blind. He sat in a real chair and near his right hand stood a cup of real tea. Simba had just returned from an eight months' trip into the French Congo, eight months of heat, thirst, fever, cruel marches, wild savages, sleepless vigilance, utter patience, and the cold, long fear of the elephant forest. Only the day before the caravan had marched into town, inconceivably ragged, but with heads up, voices chanting, *safari* sticks tap-tap-tapping the burdens, each man bedecked with ostrich plumes, bits of skin, bright ornaments carried hidden all these months. It was a wonderful moment! The chant swelled grandly, the

oryx-horn trumpets blared. Little naked children ran alongside shouting, men of all tribes came to the street, and the women had made eyes from the doorways. A grand moment! Bwana Kingozi had marched ahead, his heavy shoulders stooped, as always; his eyes staring, apparently sightless, straight ahead; his beard thrust forward by the aggression of his jaw; the glasses swinging rhythmically across his great chest; the light rifle resting in the hollow of his arm. And then he, Simba, gunbearer, with Bunduki M'Kubwa, the great elephant gun! After that, of course, the *safari*.

At the corner of the bazaar another *bwana* addressed Kingozi, and the parade halted. Simba understood not one word, but he knew passionately that high converse was forward. He stood proudly at attention, his head high, his fierce eyes rolling.

"Hello, Culbertson," the white man had said, "are you godfather to this bally circus parade?"

"These are my special pet lunatics," Kingozi had replied. "They had a hard trip and I can't begrudge them this fun."

"I know," said the other sympathetically, "makes a man feel like a silly ass just the same. My sympathy. You've got a topping lot of ivory. Where you been?"

"French Congo."

And the procession had resumed its triumphal course.

In the big tin go-down the well-wrapped tusks and the battered camp equipment had been deposited. Then from an incredible sack of silver rupees each man had been paid his due, and an appropriate *backsheeshi*, and had eagerly departed for the alluring bazaar. So it is the whole world over—miner, cowboy, lumber-jack, trapper, prospector, *safari*-man—wanderers of the wild and lonely places. When they hit town they go out for a "time." The reaction is exactly proportionate to the strain that has been. With the eager lust for celebration burning in their hearts the Africans scurried away.

And their idea of the most gorgeous, soul-satisfying, extraordinary contrast, corresponding to the roulette-whiskey-woman combination of their wilderness brothers elsewhere, was this:

they who had squatted on their heels, to sit in a white man's chair; they who had looked up from the lowly places, to look down lordly upon the passing throng from the elevation of a bona-fide raised veranda; they who had eaten of straight corn-meal *potio* and saltless wild meat, to drink that unattainable, daily desirable, symbolic, forbidden, un hoped-for tea just like a white man! Debauch is usually violent reaction against the monotonous accustomed. This was the *safari*-man's debauch!

Supply follows demand. A lumber or mining or cow town is often little more than a collection of saloons, gambling dens, or disreputable houses. So the Somali quarter of the bazaar consisted largely of wide, high, and open verandas backed by mere apologies for houses furnished with lounging chairs and tea tables. Here, dressed in snowy white *kanzua*, the professional *safari*-man lolled—at a price like unto the price of “forty-rod whiskey” out West. When his last cent was gone he looked for another job. Which is all rather childlike and a little touching, is it not?

II

SIMBA, fresh his eight months, was unbelievably wealthy. Gunbearers' wages are very high. But then gunbearers are a caste, with an especial and cunning knowledge of game, of tracking, of the proper cleaning of guns, skinning of specimens, butchering of meat, pitching of tents, and a hundred other such matters. They are called upon to risk their lives rather frequently. Such matters as staunchness, loyalty, and absolute courage are taken for granted. To fail in any of these things is not only a disgrace to one's self but one's professional mates who are a proud, heavy-handed, and vindictive lot. One may not lightly become a gunbearer even by the taking of thought for there are a dozen requisites that have little to do with thought—such as passionate loyalty, for example. Simba was one of the best. He commanded the equivalent of eight dollars a month. Even at the prevailing cost of high living *chez* Suleimani the Blind this would last for some time. So he smoked and sipped his tea and chattered with other gunbearers, and cast glances of scorn

at the passersby respectfully adoring of his high estate. He felt, after the terrible days of the French Congo, that he could stand quite a little of this.

But now came to him a Kavirondo boy, very black, his bullet head shaved to a kinky skull-cap. Having gone stark naked all his life he here looked on clothes as ornamental merely, so wore his own mainly around his neck. He gazed fixedly on Simba until that exalted personage deigned to break his discourse.

"What is it, *shenzi*?"* inquired Simba at length in Swahili.

"A white man at the hotel has sent out for you."

"I am taking my rest. Why should I go because some white man sends?" demanded Simba, for the benefit of the others on the veranda.

"What white man?"

"I do not know him. He is strange here. He is a man who walks so; and he wears a black beard!"

"But you are indeed a *shenzi*!" cried Simba, scandalized, "and have not been long from the

**Shenzi*—wildman, savage.

jungle. The very dogs know Bwana Kingozi, the Fighter of the Elephant! It is true," he told the other gunbearers, "that he and I are as the fingers on one hand."

"Ā-ā-ā-ā!" they murmured politely.

Simba rose, a commanding figure in his snow-white *kanzua* and lace-like skull-cap, his ugly honest face, with its fierce eyes, informed with savage dignity. The Kavirondo, his message delivered, had promptly disappeared.

III

THE one-storied stone hotel was set back from the shaded street. It, too, possessed a veranda, but near the level of the ground. Europeans in cool-looking tropic white sat in teak-wood lazy chairs. Simba made his way through the mob of noisy, chattering rickshaw boys. A monkey sprang from before his step; he avoided carefully the snuffing nose of a dog; he cast a glance at a chained baboon and a strolling month-old lion cub. Catching sight of his master's black beard he came to a halt and waited. After a few moments Kingozi called him and he approached.

Kingozi sat between a man and a woman. They were both young and very good-looking, though Simba would not have acknowledged the second point. To him they looked anæmic, bloodless, like grubs dug out of a log. The woman's opinion of Simba's appearance may be gathered from her first remark.

"This is the man," Kingozi said.

The woman's slender, elegantly gowned form shivered slightly.

"But he is so ugly!" she protested, in a clear, penetrating, domineering voice; "he looks positively evil. Are you certain of him? I should say he is a robber and a thief and a murderer and all that."

"I say!" protested the young man in his turn. "Perhaps the blighter understands English!"

"What of it? Does he?" she asked Kingozi.

"No," replied the latter drily. "I assure you, Lady Clarice, he is none of the things you name; but the most reliable man I could get you in all Africa."

"Jolly strong praise, that," said the man. "But you should know, Culbertson. But I'm

frightfully dashed that you can't go with us yourself. Glenmore led me to believe, you know, that you did that sort of thing occasionally, don't you see? And——" he hesitated. "If a matter of a hundred pound or so a month might stand in the way——"

"It does not," broke in Kingozi curtly. "I assure you, Lord Kilgour, if it were possible I would accompany you. But Simba, here, knows the country better than I do myself. He is thoroughly competent to handle your men, and a trained gunbearer, in the bargain. I will, however, assist you with your outfit and supplies, and will direct you to good country." He turned to Simba and began to talk Swahili. "Listen carefully. This *bwana* and this *memsahib* are very great rulers in their country. They have come to kill meat. The one who is my Bwana M'Kubwa has told me that they must have good hunting. Therefore it is necessary that you go. Get Cazi Moto for headman. That this is hard I know well. Money is hot and the pouch is thin. This is not a command I lay on you. But I wish it."

From before Simba's eyes faded the dreams of luxuries that had grown during long months. Nevertheless he replied steadily:

"I will go, *bwana*."

"*Vema*," Kingozi uttered the simple word of highest possible praise. "Come to-morrow in the third hour."

"How many men, *bwana*?"

"Who knows? But speak in the villages that many may come, for I think many may be required."

"I say," broke in Lord Kilgour, "and be sure to tell the blighter to take us where there are plenty of lions! I'm frightfully keen on lions, you know."

"Lions are chancy beasts for an unaccustomed man to hunt without backing," Kingozi suggested doubtfully.

"Rex is a topping shot and cool as ice," the woman interjected with a faint trace of pride.

"You'll yourself find the work rather rough," Kingozi hinted to her.

"I fancy not," she replied idly.

Kingozi arose abruptly.

"Well, get your luggage together, please. Have it all ready for my inspection to-morrow morning at nine. We will then go into details."

He bowed first to one and then to the other.

"*Bassi!*" he dismissed Simba, and turned in to the bar.

There he encountered the white man who had met him in procession that morning.

"I want another. Join me?"

They sipped at their drinks.

"Mac," said Kingozi, "I am a brute and a dog. Old Glenmore recommended me some people on their wedding trip who are out here shooting, and I'm dodging the job. They want to start right out; and I feel I need a breathing spell after this last trip. So I'm turning 'em over to Simba, and am staying home in idle luxury."

McCloud's eyes twinkled.

"I've seen them," he remarked drily. "Naturally you need a rest."

As they raised their glasses, their eyes met. An unwitting and shamefaced grin parted Kingozi's lips.

IV

SIMBA did not return to the bazaar. He walked at once to the villages of round bee-hive huts in the environs of white man's town. There various polite and polished youths, after listening calmly to what he had to say, suddenly broke into extraordinary activity, running from hut to hut, shouting *cazi! cazi! cazi!* at the top of their lungs. The immediate result was an outpouring of would-be bearers, men who had shone their brief wage-possessing hour at the bazaars, and now, stony-broke, were awaiting in eclipse for a new job. Simba lined them up and looked them over. He examined their muscles, their joints, their teeth, and especially their feet. In this manner he weeded out the unfit and instructed the others to report at the go-down the following morning.

In the meantime other agencies, through Kingozi, had been at work. Horses were brought in and inspected; tents laid out and repaired; utensils of all sorts collected. By the time Lord Kilgour, the following morning, sauntered to the meeting place, a *safari* was well under way.

And the following day it took the field. It was such a *safari* as Simba approved. There were seven tin officers' boxes of private effects; and two loads of ammunition; and twenty chop boxes containing the rare and mysterious viands peculiar to the white man; and a four-load green tent; tables, chairs, folding baths. The white man and the white woman each rode a bona-fide horse, not a mule; and each horse had its personal attendant. Besides Simba were also two lesser gunbearers and skinners. Then there was the Goanese cook and his helper; and in the rear wizened, wise little Cazi Moto with his rhinoceros-hide whip. And other carriers, many many carriers, bearing sacks of *potio*—ground corn-meal—with which to feed all the rest. Each man wore a brand-new jersey and carried turban-wise about his head a bright new blanket. They strung out across the landscape, near two hundred of them, in a long, imposing, colourful, and noisy procession. From the top of a rise Simba looked back upon them with approval swelling his barbaric heart. This was a *safari* worthy of a great *bwana*. And the rifles he and his companions

carried were also worthy; and the general gorgeous row and cumbersomeness of it all appealed to him as entirely fitting and significant. This unrecconciled with the fact that Kingozi was with him an article of religious faith, and that Kingozi generally travelled with about thirty ragged men.

No mention has been made of two youths who walked free and unencumbered, save by a lantern apiece, immediately behind the gunbearers. They were high-headed, sleek, suave young men, dressed in neat khaki tunics and shirts, and sporting red tarbouches with silken tassels. Ordinarily Simba liked the very efficient citizens known as tent boys, but these were different. It had, of course, been necessary to find intermediaries who could talk English, and the mission school proved the only source. Simba noted mission boys in general; and he particularly despised these two. They called themselves Josef and Tom.

As yet Simba had not seriously considered the white people who were the necessary cause of all this prideful display. They rode ahead and were satisfactorily gorgeous in sports clothes; and that

was sufficient. He headed across the undulating veldt toward the Maji Quenda.

V

IT WAS four days' march through native cultivation before the edge of the game country was reached. In that time Simba came in for a number of adjustments and learned that pomp and vanity must often pay its costs.

For example, it was impossible to get started near sunrise, as is desirable. The porters' camps were struck and packed, the loads made up, the men squatting on their heels. But within the tent of the *memsahib* long and mysterious rites went on. The sun came up, waxed in strength. And only at the long last did she emerge. Privately urged, Josef said that he duly awakened her before sunrise, as is the custom; that her hot water was promptly delivered; and that he, Josef, model of virtues, was not to blame. But it threw the march into the heat of the day; it finished the journey so late that necessary tasks were awkwardly timed. Several men, with souls beneath pomp and pride, dumped their loads and deserted.

Simba and Cazi Moto, after consultation, took aside the deserters' friends and gave them ten apiece with the *kiboko*. The justice of this was obscure, but the results admirable.

Between them Simba and Cazi Moto managed to keep things going; though such complication as the necessity of stopping at noon for a lunch brought wrinkles to their already furrowed brows. The men grumbled but stuck, for they had been promised a permanent camp on the Maji Quenda and much meat.

So it happened at the end of the fourth day. The double green tent was pitched on a height overlooking the long, sluggish, picturesque reaches of the stream. In a semicircle at a discreet distance stood the tiny porters' tents each with a little flickering fire burning in front of it. Men were dumping down armfuls of wood for the night guard-fire. Two motionless figures, their heads bedecked with ostrich plumes, leaned on muskets. In the gathering twilight the veldt stretched wide and mysterious, and from it came multitudinous sounds of beasts.

The *safari* had as usual arrived late; but even

so, after crossing the river, Lord Kilgour and his lady had seen small herds of game grazing in the distance down through the trees. Lord Kilgour had become immensely excited. He was keen to start right out; but Simba shook his head, and even Lady Clarice saw the point.

"Don't be silly!" she said, "it's going on to dusk, and very presently it will be quite dark. You'll get yourself eaten or something absurd."

As soon as the evening meal was over Kilgour called Simba and Josef to interpret.

"Tell him," said Kilgour to Josef, "that we shall go hunting in the morning."

"He says," replied Josef, presently, "that to hunt in the morning it must be that you arise very early." Josef was justly proud of his English.

"How early?"

"He says when the light comes."

"You will not be going with us then, my dear," suggested Kilgour deprecatingly.

"I certainly cannot be expected to get up any earlier than I do now," replied Lady Clarice. "I begin to dress by candlelight as it is."

"But if, my dear, for the especial occasion, you could as little abridge your toilet——"

"If you expect me to ruin my complexion on account of this rather absurd expedition," said Lady Clarice. "Why in the world cannot you do your shooting in the afternoon?"

"I'm frightfully keen to get out."

"So am I," said Lady Clarice, smothering a yawn.

It was arranged that the first hunt was to take place the following afternoon.

"And I wish you'd leave that ugly brute," requested Lady Clarice, referring to Simba. "He gives me the shivers."

But Kilgour became suddenly obstinate.

"Oh, I say!" he cried, "that's a bit thick, you know. This chap is my stand-by! Culbertson especially recommends him. He knows the game, and I don't. You must remember that, my dear."

"Why not the other two gunbearers?"

"I don't know a blessed thing about them. You must remember, my dear, that this is a dangerous country, highly dangerous. Things pop out at you right and left. It's jumpy business!"

She looked at him curiously.

"Very well," she agreed at last.

They rode out across the veldt the following afternoon, the two whites followed by the gunbearers; and then, at a distance, a dozen porters to bring in the meat. Game was everywhere in sight but none too easy of approach. After a time Kilgour dismounted, and, followed by Simba, attempted a stalk. The white woman and the *syces* and the other gunbearers watched from an eminence; and the porters squatted in a compact little group a hundred yards back. The object of the approach was a half-dozen hartebeeste. Kilgour had shot stags in Scotland and made a rather good stalk. At about forty rods' range he missed clean.

The shot was not difficult. A dull red over-spread his countenance, and he glanced covertly at Simba. Simba's face was inscrutable. The miss meant nothing to him. He had seen many *bwanas* do exactly that same thing at first in this country. In fact, he had never seen any newcomer do anything different. Sometimes it took the best shots several days to become accustomed

to the strange light. Simba reloaded and handed the rifle back.

The hartebeeste had run a half mile and had joined a herd of zebra and wildebeeste. Kilgour began a second stalk. He did very well, but the animals were more alert and the cover none too good. It is more difficult to stalk fifty animals than a dozen. At two hundred and fifty yards, warned of imminent flight, growing uneasiness, Kilgour was forced to shoot, again unsuccessfully.

There is no use going into painful details. The little procession returned at dusk unburdened.

Kilgour was savagely irritated. His many misses, barring the first, were readily excusable on account of the ranges. He had been unable to make nearer approaches. And that, he had persuaded himself, was Simba's fault.

"If that blighter would quit dogging my heels," he cried to Lady Clarice. "I tried to send him back, but he paid no attention to me! How can two men expect to get near——"

"I told you to leave him in camp," said Lady Clarice in a faintly amused voice.

Simba at the gunbearers' fire cleaned the rifle

philosophically. No meat was a great disappointment to everybody; but to-morrow——

VI

KILGOUR improved his shooting. Shortly he had no difficulty whatever in getting enough meat to keep everybody happy. Life fell into a routine. Each day they rode abroad in a wide circle. Sometimes they explored the wide, undulating plains, resembling a great sea, with wild beasts resting like gulls in the hollows of the waves. Again they crept afoot down the game trails through the forests, where the rope vines swung, the parrots and bright-coloured birds flashed, the monkeys and the colobus chattered. Or perhaps, again afoot, they made their way down the narrow river-jungle where they heard the queer cry of the bushbuck or the hollow bellowing of the hippopotami. Then toward sundown they swung back to their camp, bathed and changed, and had tea. When one section of the country had been thus well-ridden, they moved camp five or ten miles.

The white man hunted diligently and keenly,

his interest and confidence increasing day by day. The woman always rode out on every hunt. She rarely dismounted, save where the forest or jungle forced on her such a course; but sat her horse, erect, faintly smiling, as though with hidden amusement, offering lightly congratulations on success whose faintly ironic quality was lost on the perceptions of her spouse. She still manifested a scornful, careless hostility toward Simba.

"He is a sullen brute," she had decided.

Simba was not sullen, however. He was merely doing his duty as thoroughly and conscientiously as he knew how. His interest in this *bwana* was professional not personal.

Game there was aplenty. Kilgour acquired some quite respectable heads. But by one of those strange freaks of hunters' luck he failed to encounter either elephant, lion, rhinoceros, or buffalo—the Big Four of dangerous wild game. He saw tracks of them all; and every night the lions roared grandly. As is always the case his eagerness grew with the postponement of his desires until he was fairly aquiver to try his mettle.

And, again as is usual, the first encounter was totally unexpected. From apparently a perfectly flat plain, without cover enough to conceal a rabbit, there materialized the bulk of a rhinoceros, not thirty yards distant. He had been sleeping in an unexpected hollow filled with deeper grass. Lowering his horn he promptly charged.

Kilgour and Simba were afoot and some twenty yards ahead of the others. A rhinoceros charging at close range is a terrifying spectacle to one who has never seen it before. The beast is larger than one has expected and very much quicker. It utters a series of loud snorts like steam escaping from a locomotive exhaust; its great weight seems to jar the earth; and its momentum appears irresistible. All the porters unanimously took to some very spiky thorn trees. Lady Clarice tightened the reins of her terrorized horse, and sat more erect than ever. Simba, shoving ahead the safety catch, held the heavy double rifle next Kilgour's right elbow. Kilgour, paralyzed by the suddenness and unexpectedness of the onslaught, stood, his mouth open, and did nothing.

"*Piga, bwana !*" urged Simba, then, as Kilgour still stared helpless, he darted ten feet to one side and waved his arms.

The dim-sighted rhinoceros, abandoning the still figure, swerved toward the one in motion. Simba waited bolt upright until the huge beast was within a few feet, then twisted sidewise and dropped into the long grass. It was a very near thing. The rhinoceros blundered on though, and then, as is often the case, kept on going, straight ahead, until he had disappeared over the near rise of land.

The porters, with groans, began gingerly to come down the spike trees they had so blithely ascended. Lady Clarice rode forward. Kilgour seemed to come to with a start.

"By Jove!" he muttered, and again, "by Jove!" He drew a deep breath and looked about him as though bewildered. His hands were trembling slightly, but the colour came back to his face in a surge.

"You're not a pretty sight," said the woman in her high, clear voice, "why didn't you shoot the beast?"

"It was so deuced sudden," said Kilgour deprecatingly, "who'd have thought one of the bally beasts would be out there! Why, it's as flat as your hand! I was startled out of my senses. I never thought of my gun at all, I give you my word!"

She examined him for a moment and then relented.

"I daresay it was rather a facer, the first off," she said carelessly, "I daresay you'll pot the next one right enough."

"You're right," Lord Kilgour assured her fervently. "Won't catch me napping again! What?"

"Where's the other fool?" she asked abruptly. "No excuse for him. Why didn't you shoot?"

She asked the question of Simba in pantomime not to be misunderstood.

"*Hapana distauri yangu*,"* replied Simba.

She did not understand the words, but she stared at the man with a faint but real respect. His ugly face was transformed by an inner fire of dignity. For in the brief phrase he had voiced the fierce pride of caste that made him what he was.

*It is not my custom.

Immediately on the return to camp she summoned Josef to interpret.

"He says that it is not his custom to shoot the gun."

"Cannot he shoot?"

Simba's nostrils widened and his eyes flashed.

"He says he was taught the shooting by Bwana Kingozi, the one who fights the elephants."

"Well?" demanded Lady Clarice sharply.

But Josef took upon himself the burden of explanation.

"*Memsahib*," said he, "it is forbidden ever that the gunbearer should shoot the gun that he carries unless it is that the *bwana* lies upon the ground and is chewed upon by the animal. This is *distauri* (custom). And if the gunbearer ever shoots the gun, then all gunbearers call him *m'buzi*. I do not know that word in English: it is a bad word."

"Suppose," suggested the white woman, "that the rhinoceros had caught this man, would he not shoot?"

A rapid interchange in Swahili.

"Simba says," translated Josef, "that it is the

business of the gunbearer to load the gun; it is the business of the *bwana* to shoot the gun and to kill the beast."

"That will do," she said abruptly.

VII

SIMBA made nothing of it one way or another. His respect for white men as a race, and his experience with new hunters as a class, minimized the incident for him. The unknown is always startling. Soon a man learned what to expect.

But as time went on it became evident that Lord Kilgour belonged to that unfortunate class of hunters on whom the mere presence of dangerous game reacts badly. His minor coördinations were beyond his control. It was not excitement; it was certainly not fear; it was just nerves! No longer did sudden and gigantic eruptions of hostile creatures startle him to impotency; and never did he fail to walk courageously up to any animal that awaited his more deliberate attack. But always in such circumstances he was super-normal. His weapon was unsteady, his frame

atremble, and his reactions in an emergency utterly instinctive. That is all very well if a man's instincts have been trained by experience to react in the most efficient directions.

For a long time no real emergency developed. One day they followed fresh buffalo spoor until they came up with a little band resting through the heat. Then they crawled painfully down the the bed of a *donga*, the sun beating them unmercifully on the back, and lay for three hours awaiting the evening movement of the beasts. A half hour before sundown the great black bulks stirred, emerged from the thicket, and filed leisurely by, broadside on, about sixty yards away. Kilgour, lying belly down against the slope of an anthill, took an elbow rest—and missed clean with both barrels of the heavy rifle! It was incredible! A buffalo bull presents a shoulder mark nearly five feet square!

And a rhinoceros, head on, at not above forty yards; and a leopard winding sinuously through the river-jungle! The woman watched these performances without comment. Simba, his expression unchanged, fulfilled all his duties.

Kilgour was no analyst. He knew merely that he was not afraid. His emotion of shame was expressed in disgust at the poor quality of his shooting.

"I can't understand it! Rotten luck!" he complained. "I seem to get any amount of this common trash, but when anything worth while comes on, I make the most awful ass of myself! Too keen, I suppose. Can't seem to steady down when I really want a thing a lot."

His wife said nothing.

As yet they had not caught even a distant glimpse of lion. Then one day, while riding leisurely along the high slopes of a thin bush-veldt, they saw in the middle distance four strange animals rise from the grass and gallop slowly and rather lumberingly away. They were lions, but the idea of lions occurred to neither of the white people. These stood higher out of the grass, looking as tall, indeed, as zebras—carried themselves differently, ran queerly—in short, were not in the least leonine. Kilgour sat staring after them, his mind paralyzed by a chaos of surprise. He was aroused by Simba, dragging from his

grasp the light rifle, and thrusting at him the heavier weapon.

"*Simba, bwana, Simba!*" hissed the gunbearer.

Kilgour knew this Swahili word. A sudden fit of excitement seized him. He clapped spurs to his mount and dashed in pursuit.

Now Kilgour had been carefully coached in the proper method to run lions. He must not follow directly behind, but on a parallel course off one flank; for when the beast turned suddenly he must have room to step and swerve. He must keep at least a hundred and fifty yards away, for the same reason. When the lion whirled and charged, as he would certainly do, the rider must turn and run away at the best speed of his mount. Only when the lion, angered at this futile game, sat down in the grass to await the next move, must the rider dismount; and then never nearer than two hundred yards.

The flame of Kilgour's wild excitement swept his brain clear of this knowledge. He saw the lion running away, and he chased it as hard and as fast as he could.

The country was rough. Thrice his mount

nearly fell. He was hardly aware of it, nor of the fact that he had jerked it roughly to its feet. His whole attention was fixed on the tawny bodies of the lions rising and falling steadily as they loped through the scattered bushes. They were not going very fast, and he quickly shortened the distance.

A lion is no great hand at running away. He soon becomes both short of breath and angry. Then, without warning, he whirls and charges his pursuer.

One of these lions did precisely that. And Kilgour, instead of fleeing as fast as his horse could carry him, pulled up his mount and leaped to the ground.

A lion in full charge covers ground at about the rate of a hundred yards in seven seconds. He does not bound along, but runs like a very eager dog in pursuit of a thrown stick. Also he roars loudly. Kilgour consumed time in bringing his horse to a stop, in dismounting, and in coming to the position of ready. He emerged from the hasty confusion of these activities to find the lion coming strong and very close—so much closer than he had expected, or, indeed, than seemed possible,

that the surprise and flurry of it paralyzed him for three seconds. Then he hastily raised his rifle, whereupon his horse—which of course he should have abandoned—jerked back on its reins. Kilgour received a tremendous blow on his chest, and found himself lying beneath a crushing weight.

Before Simba, at the beginning of all this, had passed up the heavy rifle, he had reached for the lighter in exchange. Kilgour, however, in the concentration of pursuit had held his grip just long enough to drag the smaller rifle from Simba's grasp. It fell to the ground. Simba, running alongside the pony with the other rifle, was forced to leave it. When Kilgour, armed, had at last dashed away, Simba looked back to see the second gunbearer pick up the abandoned weapon. Therefore he kept on.

Simba was a good runner. He managed for fifty yards to keep close to Lady Clarice's horse. She motioned with her riding whip and slightly checked her mount. Simba seized her stirrup leather. So when the lion charged the two of them were within the hundred yards and were able to see clearly what happened.

Lord Kilgour, hit in the chest, was knocked flat on his back. The heavy cork sun helmet jerked forward to his chest. The lion, digging the claws of one paw into his shoulder, crunched the empty helmet once in his powerful jaws, then raised his head to stare at Lady Clarice and Simba rapidly approaching.

When within a few rods her horse balked. Simba launched himself forward. The rifle lay out of reach somewhere beneath the man and beast. Without a moment's hesitation Simba leaped astride the lion's back, wound his hands in the beast's mane, and jerked its head backward!

The lion uttered an astonished snarl. In another fraction of a second he would have turned on his tormentor and killed Simba at a blow. Lady Clarice, who had flung herself from her horse, ran up with the greatest resolution, thrust the muzzle of the little automatic, that was as ever her only weapon, against the beast's head, and pulled the trigger. The lion's muscles relaxed. He rolled over dead.

Together they dragged the man from beneath. He was dazed but not unconscious, and suffered

more from lack of wind than anything else. In a moment he sat up, and the tension was over.

"By Jove!" he gasped, "close call that! What happened?" and then he was violently sick.

But Simba, his ugly face intent, had laid bare the shoulder and was examining the claw marks. A lion's claws are always infected; the grooves full of poison of decayed animal matter. A mere scratch has many times proved fatal. Simba opened his pocket knife and calmly jabbed it a good half inch into one of the claw marks!

Kilgour let out a howl and struggled beneath Simba's grasp.

"You unspeakable blighter!" he roared. "What do you mean by that!"

"*N'dowa!*" Simba begged of Lady Clarice, paying no attention to Kilgour.

She was looking at the scene with the impersonal air of attention peculiar to her. The excitement had apparently left her quite unruffled. She shook her head at the strange word.

"The beast is murdering me!" cried Kilgour, writhing under Simba's heavy hand.

Receiving no response to his appeal, Simba

turned and methodically punctured one by one the remaining three claw marks. The blood spurted from the new wounds. Kilgour struck frantically at his tormentor, but Simba held him easily to the ground.

"Make him stop it!" commanded Kilgour. "He's killing me! You have a pistol! Make him quit!"

"I think he's finished," said the woman in her high, clear voice. "I fancy it's some savage custom."

Kilgour's face reddened and his voice rose.

"I believe you'd stand there and see me murdered: 'pon my word I do!"

She smiled and glanced toward the dead lion.

By now the second gunbearer and the other men, who had been running without the aid of stirrup leathers, began to appear upon the scene.

"*Wewe, Mavrouki, n'dowa!*" demanded Simba.

The second gunbearer fumbled in his pouch to produce a tiny flask half filled with some crystalline substance. This he uncorked and handed it to Simba. Simba attempted with the fingers of one hand to part one of the knife wounds, and

with the other to pour in some of the crystals. Kilgour, raging, struggled weakly to his feet.

Simba glanced appealingly toward Lady Clarice. She stood apart, her eyes fixed on the group, her automatic in her hand. Nothing could be read into her attitude but detached thought, watchful curiosity. He looked about. None of the men present spoke English. To manhandle a white man is in Africa *lèse majesté* of the worst sort. Simba pondered a moment, then spoke rapidly in Swahili. Lady Clarice caught the word "Kingozi" many times repeated. The men looked frightened, but advanced on the swaying white man. He hit out feebly. They laid their hands on him gently though firmly and in a moment he was held, immovable but swearing. The woman, whose face had hardened, whose muscles had tensed, whose pistol had half raised, relaxed. A slight smile parted her lips as Kilgour's bitter reproaches fell on her ears.

"They aren't going to harm you," she vouchsafed. "Better go through with it: I can't fight the lot."

With the point of his knife Simba rubbed several

of the permanganate crystals to the very bottom of the tiny wounds, then bound the shoulder with Kilgour's handkerchief. The men released their hold.

"Better attend to your beast and thank your lucky stars it's no worse," Lady Clarice cut in on his invective.

Kilgour finally simmered down. His wrath over the indignity obliterated for the time being all sense of danger past. They skinned the lion and returned to camp. Then Josef produced proper bandages and the shoulder was redressed. He heard enough of the conversation between his master and mistress to gain knowledge of the situation. He was not surprised when he was ordered to summon Simba, and to stand by for interpretation.

Kilgour started an angry interrogation, but was promptly thrust to one side by his wife.

"You're much too excited," she told him, then to Josef: "I wish to know why this man dared lay hands on his master: why he used the knife on his shoulder?"

"The *bwana* had been marked by the lion's

claws," replied Simba, "and as there is much poison in the claws of the lion I put in the shoulder the medicine given by the Bwana Kingozi. That I have been taught. Bwana Kingozi told me I must bring this *bwana* back alive: and so I must do."

"He says it was medicine," translated Josef, "to keep the *bwana* from dying of his wounds."

"Wounds!" cried Kilgour, "four little scratches I couldn't even feel. They weren't wounds until he made them so!"

"Some superstition, I tell you," she repeated.

"Well, I do not intend to be mauled because of dirty native superstitions!" he declared. "This fellow has been above himself for some time. Hereafter he can stay in camp."

But she straightened herself in her canvas chair with her first appearance of real animation.

"You have your lion," she told him, "and all the other beasts you are so keen upon. We have stopped in this beastly country long enough. To-morrow we return to Nairobi." She stared at him utterly ignoring his blank "Oh, I say!"

"We came for six weeks," she resumed in a softer tone after several moments of pregnant silence, "and they're up within three days."

Kilgour's dismay changed to bland surprise.

"No! Dash it, who would have thought it! How time flies!"

VIII

THIS *safari* made a much more impressive entrance to Nairobi than had Kingozi's two months before. It comprised many more men; they were much better dressed; and they carried sporting trophies. Banging, clattering, howling, and singing they marched again to the tin go-down, deposited their burdens, and scattered to the bazaars. Not until the morrow would they get their silver rupees, but now their credit was good. Simba bathed, assumed his long, spotlessly white robe and his lacy skull-cap, and at once made his way to the piazza of Suleimani the Blind where he ordered tea.

The white people proceeded to the low, one-storied stone hotel on the veranda of which, after a due interval, they appeared. Kingozi,

black of beard, crisp of curl, broad of shoulder, sprawled in a teak-wood lazy chair.

Kilgour's spirits were high.

"Topping country!" he answered the usual questions. "Ripping! Plenty of game where you sent us, you know. Got all the stuff I wanted. Rather a fine eland land, you know. Twenty-eight inches."

"Very decent," agreed Kingozi; "get your lion?"

"Fine one—tawny mane," said Kilgour airily; then with ill-concealed indifference: "Mauled a bit by him!"

Kingozi exclaimed, then heard the story bit by bit.

"Close thing," he commented. "Buffalo?"

"Bad luck with them," confessed Kilgour; then with an effort: "Should have killed one but missed."

"Too bad. How did your men work out? Any trouble with them? Cazi Moto handle them all right for you?"

Kilgour's face clouded.

"Cazi Moto is a ripping old chap. Handled

things right as rain. Had no trouble with any one but that head gun boy. He's plucky and all that, but quite incompetent, I should say."

"Really! Simba?" rejoined Kingozi, his interest quickening. "What was the trouble?"

"Doesn't know his business. I could never get him to hold back on a stalk, nor take cover, nor obey orders—that's the real trouble, I fancy: lack of discipline. Most insubordinate beggar. Needs a dose of whats-what!"

"Tell me," breathed Kingozi sympathetically.

Kilgour detailed the petty grievances that had slowly accumulated, enumerating the especially desirable animals that had escaped because—he was by now firmly convinced—of some dereliction on the part of Simba.

"So," he concluded, "I'd reprimand the beggar if I were you. Of course I knew," he hastened to add, "that you had every confidence in the man when you recommended him; and that is why I am telling you now; so that in the future——"

Lady Clarice interposed a sudden request for a wrap. Kilgour disappeared.

"Here is some money," she said to Kingozi,

"which I wish to give to this man Simba from me. Please do not mention the fact to my husband."

"This is princely," said Kingozi, eyeing the note.

"It is well earned," she replied.

"Then I gather you do not share your husband's opinion?"

"I do not."

"Yet, if my memory serves me, you entertained a rather violent prejudice against the man."

"I have changed my views."

"I see." Kingozi stared for a moment into the darkness beyond the veranda rail. Then he looked at her. "Are you going to read me this riddle?" he asked.

"Not in detail. I will tell you this: Rex in some things is an incredible fool—and has no inkling of the fact. I believe another week in this country would have found him his death. That it did not find him before is, in my opinion, due to this man Simba."

"Lord Kilgour is next in succession to the earldom, I believe," said Kingozi, with significance.

"Why should one trouble to tell you things?" she said.

IX

SIMBA stood before Kingozi's chair answering questions. Kingozi was enjoying himself. He had not yet bestowed Lady Clarice's gift. Preliminaries of country and game were over. They talked in Swahili.

"This *bwana* shoots well?"

"He does not shoot well."

"He understands *shikari*."

"No, *bwana*, he does not understand *shikari* well."

"The *bwana* is afraid."

But Simba would not criticise a white man. "The *bwana* is not at all afraid, but he does not shoot well."

Kingozi smiled beneath his beard.

"It was difficult to prevent the *bwana*'s being hurt or killed?"

"He is here, *bwana*, safe."

"Suppose he goes to Sotik, would you go as his gunbearer?"

"If *bwana* tells me," replied Simba. His eyes were dull, his expression inscrutable.

Kingozi's twinkle retreated to the depths of his eyes.

"But women on a *safari*—they are bad—one does not care to have them," he suggested.

Simba's form straightened, and he lifted his heretofore indifferent gaze to his master.

"*Bwana*," said he earnestly, "this woman says not much, does not much. She sits on her horse and she looks. But, *bwana*, she is a great *memsahib*!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE EDGE OF THE RIPPLE

LEWIS paced the bridge and gazed upon the lake. He was armed with a 22-calibre repeating rifle which occasionally he let off whenever one of the huge fish floating belly up came within range. At such times he turned out the whole magazine, and when he succeeded in puncturing the swollen carcass, he evidenced a disproportionate and savage joy. The 22-calibre rifle and the fish were his only nervous outlets; and Lewis was near explosion. The calm of his demeanour was supreme—and hollow.

He had good reason. The sweat-bath atmosphere, for one thing; the ultra-violet rays of a vertical sun, for another; an ill-charted, little-navigated rock-strewn coast for a third; hippos that blew violently to make one jump, a full deckload of native passengers, and a native crew that after two years' training remained sweetly

convinced that "do-it-now" was a motto never conceived for Africa, even on a steamboat. By long practice Lewis had become fairly expert at foreseeing contingencies. He could issue his orders far enough ahead—like shooting cross-flying ducks. But when the unexpected happened—some day would come a real emergency demanding instant action, and then—— Oh, Lord!

Lewis punctured his eighth fish, sent the remaining pellets in his magazine at a cynical crocodile, and laid the weapon in its rack. Behind him the steersman leaned on the wheel. The steersman's head was shaved like a fancy hedge; he wore a jam pot in the distended lobe of one ear and a tobacco tin in the other; glistening with oil, his naked red-brown skin set off pleasingly his necklets and armlets of polished brass; a bead band encircled his waist. He manipulated the wheel indifferently with hands or prehensile toes. He was quite a good steersman; but Lewis gazed on him with distaste.

"When we go between the islands," he said in the Swahili language, "keep the white float on the left-hand side. Understand?"

"Yes, *bwana*," replied the steersman.

"I wouldn't bet on it, you blighter," muttered Lewis, making his way aft along the raised platform that continued the level of the bridge. This was covered by a double awning. On it stood a table and a number of lazy chairs of teak wood. Here in a little upper world above the welter of freight and natives dwelt day and night continuously whatever white men might be aboard.

It was this morning occupied by a single individual, a bearded man with a quick, dancing eye. He had come aboard at Balaka accompanied by a number of elephant tusks, a small pile of battered baggage, and two native servants. Evidently he knew the ropes, for he made his way promptly to the upper quarters, and established himself in comfort.

"We may as well have tiffin," said Lewis, dropping heavily into a chair. "We're out of the rocks." He filled and lighted a pipe. Two or three deep puffs seemed to calm him. "Nothing ahead for an hour but the passage between the islands. And that's simple. One mud bar, but

last passage I dropped a buoy on that. Rather proud of that buoy—first on the Lake!”

The elephant hunter whose name was Culbertson, alias Kingozi, nodded without speaking. Lewis went on with the volubility of a nervous man.

“Ought to chart this Lake properly. No excuse for letting us barge along regardless. Boy!” he shouted, “*lete chakula maramoja !*”

While awaiting the arrival of lunch in accord with this last command, he leaned back gazing at the passing shores.

They were high, barren, untropical looking, with rocky points reaching far out and indentations reaching deep in. On the rocks crocodiles sunned themselves. The smoke of villages arose inland; and the brush wiers and dugout canoes of the native fishermen could be seen. On the other side was the open Lake, like an ocean.

The ship’s prow swung. She headed for what was apparently the solid shore. At the last moment a portion of the latter detached itself to disclose a passage. Lewis arose and stepped forward for a look.

"My buoy is there right enough," he reported with satisfaction. "Great relief!"

The shores drew near; closed around them. Beehive roofs of native thatched huts could be seen, and blotches of dull colour that would prove to be compact herds of humped cattle. A black boy dressed in a single gown-like garment of spotless white climbed the companion carrying a tray.

"Tiffin!" cried Lewis with satisfaction.

The ship stopped short with a dull thud. Under the impact the black boy plunged across the deck and plastered his trayful of food against the back of the pilot house. Lewis and Kingozi fell out of their chairs, which tipped over on top of them. There ensued a dense silence almost immediately broken by a pandemonium of shrieks and yells from the lower deck.

White with fury Lewis scrambled to his feet and in three bounds was inside the pilot house and at the helmsman's throat.

"You black imp of the devil!" he yelled in English. "You just wouldn't do as you were told, would you! Why didn't you do as I told

you!" he cried in Swahili. His voice cracked to a treble with released hysteria. The helmsman, his eyes protruding, was incapable of replying. Lewis continued to shake and throttle him. Finally Kingozi intervened.

"Better drop it," he advised quietly, putting his hand on Lewis's shoulder. "Go see what's happened to your ship."

Lewis stared at him with wild eyes. The effort he made over himself was visible. After a few seconds his hands relaxed.

"You're quite right, of course," he said, his voice again under the vibrant nervous control of a man overstrained. "Thank you."

He dove for the lower decks, where the confusion had increased. The elephant hunter hitched a chair to the bridge rail where he could see. Inside the pilot house the helmsman was gasping for breath and feeling his throat.

Lewis went to work ably and methodically. Kingozi reflected that no doubt he was the man for the job, even if the job was "getting" him. In dealing with excited natives excitement only adds fuel. Outwardly Lewis was perfectly calm,

but it was the calm of a capped artesian well. In his hand he carried a *kiboko*—the hippopotamus hide whip of the country. Order restored, he began the necessary labour. The *Gwendolin* had thrust her nose high up on a mud bank. Reversed engines accomplished little. Lewis began patiently to shift cargo. Dozens of native canoes gathered about.

Becoming bored Kingozi returned to his reclining chair. There he smoked for a time, then fell asleep.

He was awakened three hours later by the return of the captain. The latter fell heavily into his armchair and shouted for lime juice and sparklets. Kingozi opened his eyes. Observing this, Lewis broke forth.

"I ask you, as a man," he cried, "can you top this? What do you suppose happened? These bounders of local niggers moved my buoy about a hundred feet to the southeast! And what for!" Lewis's voice rose to a treble. "To hitch their bally fishing canoes to! Oh, that's right; laugh, damn you!" He gulped down his drink, lit his pipe, and subsided to mutterings.

The *Gwendolin*, her nose somewhat in the air pending the shifting back of the cargo, was again plowing ahead. Gradually Lewis calmed down.

"Now I'm delayed four good hours," he grumbled. "There's no keeping even in this country! I've got to stop in for the night at Irabanga. Beastly hole!"

"No navigation at night?" surmised Kingozi.

"Navigation at night!" Lewis laughed bitterly, scorning more specific reply.

At dusk the ship swung past a low boulder point and into a bay narrow as a river but reaching inland at least two miles. The water was deep. At the lower end were a narrow beach and a jungle of cocoanut palms from which smoke arose. A rickety wharf, extending fifty feet, was blanketed by a sturdy, stubby, sidewheel steamer.

"There's Heine," remarked Lewis with a mixture of pleasure and vexation. "Dutchman—German—runs that tub of a *Hohenzollern* around the Lake. Trade rival and all that sort of thing. Look at him hogging the whole jetty. Move? Not he! Now I'll have to anchor. More row and trouble and fuss! Hell!"

"Regular German swine, eh?" said the ivory hunter.

"Heine? No; he's a good sort. We'll have a good evening. I suppose he did get there first; and there isn't room for but one of us at a time. Well, to get at it!"

They got at it. By dint of shrieks, yells, blows, and arguments conducted at length in the very face of pressing necessity the Baganda mates translated Lewis's commands—pleadings rather—into action. The anchor splashed overboard. Except that the *Gwendolin* was fifty yards from the place selected, that the apparatus had twice jammed, that the fluke had gouged five feet of paint and slivers from the bow, and that the rush of the anchor chain had carried overboard three native bundles and a chair, all was well. Lewis wiped his streaming brow with a long, trembling sigh of relief. He sat down limply.

"Must get hold of myself!" he muttered.

Kingozi was eyeing him with entire understanding.

"You need some chuck," he said. "Remember, we got no tiffin."

"Heine will have us over shortly," replied Lewis.

Dusk was falling, and the hills to the westward were rising in silhouette. In the jungle fires were gleaming. Drums began to throb dully, and people to chant. A light shone in the *Hohenzollern* upper cabin as the door opened. A very fat man emerged and waddled to the rail.

"*Wie gehts, Johnny!*" he roared in a voice that broke through all the compact stillnesses and minor cadences of the tropical evening. "Coom on ofer! *Chakula* iss ready!"

They rowed over to the rickety pier and clambered aboard. The *Hohenzollern* did not differ greatly from the *Gwendolin* in general arrangement, and they ascended immediately to the wide platform-like upper deck. There the fat man greeted them. He was rotund rather than obese, his complexion was baby pink, his blond hair rose *en brosse*, and his heavy moustache fell naturally over his lips. Lewis and Kingozi were clasped by a soft, moist hand.

"It iss goot to see you!" cried Heine, his chubby face wreathed in smiles. "This iss lonely busi-

ness. Sit down! sit down! *Lete chakula!*" he roared to the steward standing not three feet away.

Lewis sank gratefully into the lazy chair.

"Lonesome, yes; I believe you—and aggravating! Oh, Lord! These niggers!"

"Niggers? yes; but they are stupid children," agreed the German comfortably.

"And malicious," added Lewis with bitterness.

"Malicious? So?" replied Heine in some surprise. "But that I had not thought."

The steward brought the evening meal and they ate, while the thick darkness drew close about them, and the tropic stars flared clear, and the twinkling fires took on the tinge of red.

They had soup, curry, yams, baked bananas, and coffee.

"One cannot drink beer!" sighed Heine, "that I haf found. And whisky is bad. But here are goot cigars!"

They talked of various topics, the common-places of everyday life—how the crops of *n'jugu* nuts were coming on, the prospects of cattle quarantine being declared in the Ikorongo district, the best routes from one point to another,

the spread of sleeping sickness, the quality of lubricating oil, the price of ivory, the scarcity of labour, the chances for success in cotton planting—all subjects near to heart and on which they had ideas.

"Anything outside?" Kingozi asked idly, in a pause.

Heine shook his head.

"I haf been to the foot of the Lake—I haf nothing seen," he answered.

"I saw Reuter's despatches when I was in at Kimi, last week—no, two weeks ago."

"Anything especially startling?"

"Falling Star won the Goodwood Cup."

"You don't say!" cried Kingozi. "Falling Star—but of course I have been out of it for a year. He must have come up strong!"

"You und your race horses!" chaffed Heine.

"Then I believe the Americans won at tennis," went on Lewis slowly, trying to recollect, "and they've had one of their usual floods in China—and, oh, yes, I knew there was something else! One of the Austrian Grand Dukes was assassinated down in Serbia."

"An Austrian Grand Duke!" repeated Heine, interested at last. "Who vass it?"

Lewis pondered. "I can't place it," he confessed.

"Who vass the assassin?"

"Some student or other—Serbian."

Heine wagged his ponderous head.

"Such foolishness! when they might be on deck at Irabanga with goot friends. Vell, let them kill each other. That makes nothing to us—while the *n'jugu* nuts still grow."

The two Englishmen rowed back to the *Gwendolin* two hours later. Lewis was greatly refreshed in spirit, relaxed in mental fibre. He puffed at a final cheroot leisurely and luxuriously, not with the nervous speed of his earlier evening. Kingozi saw by the light of the companion lamp that his face had fallen into more peaceful lines; heard that he hummed under his breath the bars of a song popular five years ago.

"Heine's a good soul," remarked Lewis. "He hogs the trade when he can, and he hogs the piers, and he swills his food, and he's a good deal of a beast in many ways—but he's a good soul."

The next morning the *Gwendolin* steamed

away—after much miscellaneous shrieking inefficiency—leaving the *Hohenzollern* still gorging *n'jugu* nuts at the pier. By nightfall she had reached the important harbour of Kimi. Here ended the main caravan route from the coast, and here in all the panoply of one flag staff, one bronze cannon (relic from Portuguese days), one District Commissioner and dwelling, two European shops, and twenty Indian *dukkas*, six residences of corrugated iron and uncounted native huts of thatch dwelt the power of empire as represented in this particular part of Central Africa. In addition to those land glories was a bona-fide pier made of bona-fide piling, a huge iron go-down, and a miscellaneous and irresponsible maritime population of dugouts and dhows scattered all over the place. They were anchored everywhere, in the channel as thickly as anywhere else. The *Gwendolin* barged and blundered her way through the mess, escaping barratry and homicide by inches, pursued and accompanied by native words that ran to a rate of thousands per minute; and was confronted by a pier and the problem of landing thereat!

And when finally the gangplank was heaved aboard, hitting the deck with one inch to spare, and both bow and stern lines had been made definitely fast, Lewis swabbed his steaming brow.

"Praise God!" said he fervently; and Kingozi understood why lake captains so soon crack up and have to be sent home out of the tropics.

II

CAPTAIN LEWIS turned out the next morning considerably refreshed. This was because for the next few days he had no responsibilities. It was up to McCann—poor devil—to get the cargo out of the hold and into that tin hell of a go-down. Lewis lit a cheroot and sauntered up to the District Commissioner's headquarters in search of amusement. He was reasonably sure of it there.

For Browning the D. C. ruled about a million people—and was exactly twenty-four years of age. Moreover, he ruled them well, after a fashion of his own, which was enthusiastic, erratic, and in detail unknown to Downing Street. For example, Browning was keen for good roads—a "road" in that country being, of course, a three-foot path

crowned and raised above the flood mark. But native chiefs did not share his enthusiasm, and could not be persuaded to force their people into construction. Browning's diplomacy was direct. Under a requisition for "trade goods" he sent to England for twenty-one bicycles; and on their arrival spent an enormous amount of time and patience in teaching the local potentates to ride. Thereafter gaudy *sultanis* clad in brass jewellery and a mosquito or so could be seen streaking it across the landscape followed by winded courts. And when that *sultani* came a cropper, he had out a thousand men to repair the road! Many similar stories could be told of Browning's administration; but this one gives a good idea of Browning.

His second in command, a patriarch of twenty-two, was Bobby Calthrop. What Browning did not think of Bobby did; and what they both thought of at the same time was immediately carried out with a *verve* and *flaire* fairly inspiring. Yet, it must be repeated, these two apparent irresponsibles governed that district justly, and—if results were a criterion—wisely as well.

Lewis found them, together with Kingozi and two strangers whom he identified as casual sportsmen, busily engaged on the open space in front of the official bungalow. There for many years had stood an old Portuguese cannon of bronze. It was a relic of a hundred years ago, heavily embossed, and of course quite useless save as an ornament. Over this ancient piece the five white men were engaged. Five or six hundred natives squatted interestedly near by.

"The touch hole is free," Bobby was saying. "I can blow through her."

"The bore is none too good," grunted Browning, who was poking vigorously down the muzzle with a stick.

"I'll bet the balls will fit just the same," rejoined Bobby. "Here," he yelled in native dialect. "Bring some of those iron stones there," indicating an ornamental pyramid of round cannon balls.

He was about to insert one of these into the muzzle.

"Hold on!" cried one of the strangers. "Suppose it sticks? How are you going to get it out?"

"Good Lord! I never thought of that!" said Bobby, mopping his brow.

"We've got to clean it out until we're sure!" insisted Browning.

They set to work at this, busy as bees. Lewis, by long experience, had learned better than to question. He sat down in the shade, puffed his cheroot, and waited the event. The natives, too, stared round-eyed.

"That'll do! Now let's load her!" cried Browning triumphantly at last.

"I don't suppose she'd stand nitro powder or cordite," said Bobby in some doubt.

"I should say not!" voted Kingozi with emphasis.

"I'm afraid we haven't any black powder except a little in some shotgun shells. But that wouldn't be enough. There's some blasting powder—how would that do?"

It was decided worth a trial. After further discussion a proper charge was agreed upon, and inserted into the relic. The cannon ball followed and fitted!

"We can prime her with some black powder out of the shotgun shells," said Browning.

But now a new difficulty supervened. Even these reckless youths saw objections to touching the experimental shot off by hand. Someone produced blasting fuse. But it became necessary to bore out the touch hole to a larger size. At length, however, all seemed to be ready.

"Now," cried Bobby triumphantly, "we'll just train her on that big rock on the side hill there and see how she goes!"

"This is the time to retire somewhat!" observed Lewis to himself.

The idea was unanimous, and promptly adopted. In ten seconds Bobby Calthorp alone was left. He puffed his cheroot to a glow, held it against the end of the fuse—and fled wildly at the first nerve-shattering sputter.

A smoky, fizzly pause; then a tremendous explosion and a cloud of smoke.

"Ā-ā-ā-ā!" came a native chorus of astonishment.

Bobby danced excitedly into the open.

"Did you see that? How's that for a shot!" he shrieked. "Plunked her square in the middle." And indeed the iron ball had smashed the boulder to bits.

They gathered interestedly. The results were gratifying. The cannon was intact; it had not kicked itself loose from its mountings.

"It blew an awful blast from the touch hole," observed one of the sportsmen.

"Perhaps you'll kindly tell me what you are celebrating?" inquired Lewis, sauntering up.

They fell upon him, all talking at once. War! Germany against France and Russia, then England! Fighting in Belgium! Liège and Namur both taken! Our troops are already in France! What's more we've been jolly well licked and forced to retreat, but there's a stand being made at the River Marne.

"Where did you get all this?" interjected Lewis.

"Oh, beg pardon, Mr. Hobart and Captain Hardy—Mr. Lewis," said Browning. "These gentlemen saw the latest Reuters on their way in. They were out for some shootin'."

"The dirty beasts! Now we'll get a chance at them!" cried Lewis, his racial antagonism flaring.

"We're going to mount the cannon on the *Gwendolin*," explained Bobby Calthrop, "and then

go hunt up that German steamer—the *Hohenzollern*!”

Lewis seized the idea eagerly. His overwrought nerves welcomed this outlet. He burned with a fever of action. The German swine! A hundred disagreeable personal memories of the travelling German pressed against his recollection. A latent, unsuspected antagonism leaped within him, a real hate. Take the *Hohenzollern*—that was it! The German swine—hogging the piers, sneaking into covers that belonged to him, Lewis, by right of discovery, taking trade that was his by virtue of development!

They impressed a hundred of the natives and dragged the cannon and its ornamental balls down to the wharves. There McCann, perspiring and patriotically faithful, had been discharging cargo. A short delay for rifles and various provisions, and once more the *Gwendolin* pointed her nose lake-ward.

III

THE time passed heavily, even with the *Gwendolin* forging ahead under a forced draft. The

white men smoked interminably, discussed endlessly, jumped up and down, peered through glasses. Lewis was heading back to Irabanga, but there was a chance that the German boat might have taken on cargo and be at sea. There were a dozen false alarms. Bobby Calthrop agitatedly reported black smoke, and the *Gwendolin* was turned in its direction; but the smoke turned out to be one of those drifting, dense clouds of flies for which the Lake was famous. Again they swerved to inspect supposed masts behind an island; and discovered only a native drying rack. It was all most exciting.

"Beats lions," observed Hobart. "Talk about your big game!"

Toward five o'clock the point at Irabanga detached itself from the shoreline and swiftly approached. The white men gathered in a group on the forward part of the bridge. A tense silence fell. Each scanned eagerly through his glasses. Foot by foot the bay opened up. Now could be seen the fringes of the cocoanut grove, the grove itself, some of the native huts, the foot of the pier, the pier itself——

Bobby dropped his glasses to the end of their strap and uttered a cheer. The *Hohenzollern* was there!

Lewis personally took the wheel. Bobby and the two sportsmen rushed down the companion and tore the canvas from the artillery. The elephant hunter paused to light a cheroot in the shelter of the pilot house, then followed. The cheroot did not indicate a desire to smoke; it was intended as a slow fire. Browning, as befitted his high estate as ranking officer, walked back and forth across the bridge. His keen eyes were dancing, his brown hair was tumbled, his mouth was aquirk with mischievous delight.

The *Gwendolin* turned down the long, narrow reach of the bay. The objects at its foot began to take on definition. When about half a mile from the pier, Browning spoke:

"Half speed, captain," he ordered.

Lewis obediently rung up half speed.

"Way enough; stop her," said Lewis after a moment.

The engines fell to silence. Then unexpectedly came Browning's third command. It was uttered

in Swahili and delivered with and accompanied by items of emphasis that spoke much for the D. C.'s knowledge of natives. And so efficacious was it that the *Gwendolin* rounded to her anchor about three hundred yards from the pier.

"What did you do that for?" someone inquired out of the amazement.

"Gentlemen, I consider this about a sporting distance," said Browning calmly. "Prepare to fire."

Lewis at the wheel felt within him a slight movement of protest. It seemed only fair first to summon the *Hohenzollern* to surrender. But what difference? The super-excited lunatics in the waist were completely absorbed in technical problems.

"The bally thing will *not* swing far enough," panted Bobby, tugging at a rope.

"For heaven's sake don't jiggle her so; you'll lose all the priming powder," urged Harding.

"Can't you just give her a kick with the screw, old man?" the elephant hunter implored Lewis. "She may swing."

Lewis obligingly kicked her.

"Great!" howled Bobby, snatched the cheroot from the elephant hunter, and pressed it against the end of the fuse.

Everybody scattered precipitately; everybody but Bobby, who remained near the breech. An explosion shook the *Gwendolin* to her keel. Bobby's agonized voice arose from the dense cloud of smoke.

"I can't see a damn thing!" he wailed, "where did she hit?"

But that nobody could tell. The foot of the bay, the pier, the *Hohenzollern*, and the jungle beyond slept peacefully in the late afternoon sunlight.

"Must have overshot," was the opinion of the elephant hunter. "Or we'd have seen it hit."

A few scared-looking natives peeped out of the jungle and disappeared. There was no other sign of life.

"We'll have to raise the breech some way," said Bobby. "See if some of you can't find a block."

They raised the breech after a fashion; they swabbed out the bore against lingering sparks;

they reloaded it with more blasting powder and another of the ornamental cannon balls; they filled the vent with shotgun powder, and laid thereto another length of fuse. Then Captain Lewis kicked her again with the screw, and at what was deemed the proper moment the ancient piece was again touched off. Same result.

"We're out of range," ventured Harding.

"We are not!" countered Bobby in heated defense of his piece. "We'd have seen the splash if we'd fallen short."

"Then you're a rotten shot," Harding pointed the alternative.

"Well, let's see you do better!" cried Bobby.

It took some time to reload and relay the old cannon. Shots were at least five minutes apart. Harding had a try, with no better luck; and then each of the others. All but Captain Lewis. He stayed by the wheel, but was as much excited as the rest. To a dispassionate observer the contrast would have been interesting—the bustle and bluster, excitement, sweat, and noise aboard the *Gwendolin*; the thunderous blasts, leaping flame, and dense clouds of smoke; and the peaceful

lower end of the bay, its waters mirroring placidly the rickety pier, the chubby old steamboat, the motionless jungle and the sky.

"Look over her for yourself!" cried Bobby in answer to some sarcasm. "She must jump high. She's fairly pointing at the water now, you couldn't lower the muzzle any more. I don't understand it!"

But at this moment Lewis came storming down from the bridge where for some moments he had tried in vain to make himself heard.

"Here, you bally idiots!" he shrieked in their ears. "Attend to me a moment! You're not going high; you're too low!"

"Then you'd see a splash——" insisted Bobby, doggedly sticking to his point.

"I tell you we're too far away——" said Harding, sticking to his.

"For heaven's sake listen to me!" howled Lewis, exasperated beyond all measure.

He got their attention finally. It seemed that he had just noticed something. Possibly the first shot had gone high—who knows? But the piece had been depressed too much for all subsequent,

that was sure. The balls fitted very loosely in the bore. They stayed atop the powder where they were rammed only until they were jarred. When the screw of the ship "kicked" her around they were so jarred, and they simply rolled out the muzzle and overside. Only blanks were being fired. How did he know? He had seen the last ball splash alongside the ship.

"Well, of all the bally idiots!" cried Bobby. "What we need is wadding."

They procured wadding, relaid the gun at a guess. The next shot was a success; that is, it was seen to splash water a hundred yards or so from the mark. But the one succeeding! A rending crash of timbers succeeded the shot, and splinters flew from the piling fifty feet astern the *Hohenzollern*.

"Hurrah!" cried Browning. "We've got the elevation! Swing her a little."

But now for the first time life showed aboard the German ship. The pilot-house door swung open, and a huge figure in pajamas waddled to the rail and raised a megaphone.

"Look oudt! Look oudt!" bellowed Heine's

voice in irritated tones. "What you do? If you don't look a leedle oudt you're going to hit my bo-ut!" He lowered his megaphone, wiped his brow, and raised the instrument again. "Oh, Lewis!" he roared, "when you get through das celebradtion coom ofer und half *chakula*!" Then he turned his broad back, waddled into the pilot house, and the door closed behind him.

A blank pause ensued.

"He thinks we're salutin' the King's birthday!" cried Bobby disgustedly.

"Heave up that anchor there!" commanded Lewis with decision. "We ought to be ashamed of ourselves!"

Fifteen minutes later Heine leaned on the rail watching the receding smoke of the *Gwendolin*. He smoked a porcelain pipe.

"So there is war," he said to himself. "Such foolishness! What does it make for me? Still, there are *n'jugu* nuts. And now I am safe. They will not bother me. There is no defense so good as a laugh."

CHAPTER IX

COW IVORY

ALONG the front of the hotel at Mombasa —just below the equator and across the way from spicy Zanzibar—runs a broad second-story veranda paved with cool, smooth tile, and looking out through arches to the coral roadway and the palms and gorgeous flowering trees of a park. Heavy teak-wood lazy chairs with adjustable leg rests stand in a row. Quiet black men spring to magical visibility at a call. Tepid breezes wander in from the perfumed tropical night; and in the long silences the occupants of the lazy chairs, listening attentively, can hear the soft growl of the Indian Ocean under a sailing moon.

One steamer night three of the teak-wood chairs were occupied by men smoking in the evening comfort of pajamas. Two of them had come out on the ship just arrived; the third,

a slow-moving quiet man with a rumbling great voice and a bushy great beard, had met them in the harbour, had piloted them to the hotel, had fed them and drunk them and smoked them and now was talking to them slowly, between puffs of his cheroot. For he was Culbertson, ex-elephant hunter, for the moment Ship's Agent; and these two men were of some importance to the Company.

"I'll agree with you," Culbertson alias Kingozi, by which name he was best known, was saying to the eldest of the three, Lord Marshlands, a small, quiet, efficient tanned man, "it was a fine thing—any sacrifice is. But it was not, as you think, the highest of all. Sacrifice of life is nothing, any more than mere personal courage. They are too common."

"Oh, I say!" objected the youngest, a fresh-faced eager boy of twenty-five. "That's a little steep, isn't it?"

Culberston smiled at him.

"Not a bit. Courage is the commonest thing there is, only it doesn't happen to be called out in everyday life. So when a man walks up to a

lion we shiver and applaud him for bravery; but when in war a hundred thousand men green from the city stick tight, we take it for granted. Am I right, Marshlands?"

The little man nodded. Kingozi paused to allow a screaming native row in the street below to die down. This it did on the mere appearance of a tall, smart Nubian policeman in tarboush, red kummerbund, and shining buckles.

"It really means more for a man to sacrifice his ideals or his self-respect for another than for him to sacrifice his life," went on Kingozi, reaching his hand for the drink at his elbow. "But that doesn't matter. It's the fact of sacrifice that really counts, and not what is sacrificed, for it implies something in the world stronger than the individual—no bad things these times."

"I'd like to know whether I'll funk it when I run up against my first lion," blurted out the young man, who had not been paying the slightest attention to Kingozi's line of thought.

"Not you Carson, I know your type," said the Ship's Agent kindly. His big voice rumbled on, deliberately, dispassionately, unfolding his

argument. "There are various things bigger than the individual," he continued, "such as patriotism, friendship, an idea—but most often love." He chuckled hugely, and gulped down his drink. "Boy!" he shouted. A white-robed figure detached itself from the shadows and glided to his side. "*Lime juicy n'gini*," ordered Culbertson. He chuckled again. "Eh, my lad? And the tragedy lies generally not in the sacrifice, but in the uselessness of it."

"I suppose you know what you are driving at," said Lord Marshlands resignedly. "Is it essential that I continue to listen? It is a hot night."

"Did you ever hear of the Marsabit cow ivory?" demanded Kingozi abruptly.

"Can't say I have," said Marshlands. Young Carson pricked up his ears. He remembered that Kingozi had been the greatest elephant hunter of his times.

"Ten years ago four men made *safari* north of Kenia into the Marsabit country," continued Kingozi. "They were after ivory, and as it was a commercial transaction, they did not care particularly how they got it. The country was

then unknown. You're going up there on your shoot, aren't you, Carson?"

The young man nodded.

"Well, you'll find it a different place now. The natives are all nice and tame; you can buy jam and marmalade at Meru *boma*—plenty of game though. But then—well, I fancy those chaps earned their ivory! They took long enough at it—gone two years. Nice dry sort of country, with water holes sixty miles apart, thorn scrub, hot, funny, unknown tribes with interesting ideas and spears. But plenty elephants; and considerable trade ivory to be had—Lord! a fine country for a real man! They must have been real men, for they all came out alive, and they hadn't any of them murdered each other. That's no joke, I tell you. Under the equator, two years, hard country, no luxuries, no rest—and everybody happy enough not to bite, anyway. Furthermore, they were rich. I don't suppose so valuable a *safari* of ivory ever was got together before. You know there's a lot of difference in ivory. Just lay out a few random tusks before an Indian buyer, if you don't believe it. He'll pick it out

for you! Matter of grain and density, how well it will carve, what its resiliency is—oh, a lot of things! But the best ivory of all is cow ivory. Finer, more bounce, great stuff! Most first-quality billiard balls used to be made of cow ivory. Costs like blazes, and it ought to; for besides being of better quality, a cow's tusks rarely weigh over fifteen or twenty pounds to the pair. A good bull, as you know, runs to a hundred or more.

“It was the custom in those days to take whatever came along. These men had made a great haul. They arrived at the Guaso Nyero River—I believe they had camels and Somali drivers—after a sixty-mile trek without water, just about done up, but pretty happy. There they got a shock.

“The usual way out from that country crossed where Arthur Neumann later made his headquarters at what he called Campi ya N'Yama Yangu. They and their camels and their Somalis and their miscellaneous natives dropped in late. As a usual thing a man always crosses a river before making camp—just in case it might rise during the night—but this was the dry season and

they done up, so they camped on the north bank. That was a lucky thing. For shortly after dark they caught the gleam of fires across the way. Some of their men, wading across to investigate, returned to say that a white man's *safari* was encamped there. The hunters got themselves carried over, and shortly found themselves in the presence of a very trim, businesslike young officer of the K. A. R.—The King's African Rifles, you know," Kingozi explained to young Carson.

"He was a decent sort, and I always thought he pretty well suspected the situation and took pains to give indirect warning. It would have been only decent of him, in the circumstances. He invited them to his quarters—you know the official camp; green double tent with a fly out front, canvas chairs, folding table, siphon of sparklets. From him they immediately learned that British East Africa had overnight, as it were, become an administered political unit.

"‘You chaps are out of a job here now y’know,’ the young officer told them. ‘Game laws going, and all that sort of thing. Two elephants all you’re allowed, on special license, costs ten

pound. Of course I'll certificate your ivory as coming from outside. But it's lucky you have no cow ivory. You told me you had no cow ivory, did you not?' They hadn't told him that, but they nodded back at him, waiting. 'Contraband; absolutely,' he told them. 'Confiscated wherever found; goes to the government.'

"They returned to their own camp as soon as possible. The bulk of their wealth, of their two years' work in the waterless thorn, was in cow ivory. There was but one opinion: It must be hidden, pending better understanding of the conditions, and since natives are notoriously uncertain and leaky, it must be hidden secretly and at once. That was no light problem. Think it over; several camel loads of ivory to move; several dozen of their own men to avoid; only one black, an old gunbearer, they could thoroughly trust. Finally they called the leading Somalis, made them load the camels; and then three of the whites started out alone with the gunbearer. The fourth, his elephant rifle across his arm, sat by a big fire in the clear light of which were huddled the personnel of the party. Not a man was allowed to

move a foot for any purpose whatsoever. All night long they sat there in grim silence. The dawn broke; daylight came; the sun rose. From across the river were heard the sounds of activity in the soldiers' camp. The watcher must have become very anxious. At last the three white men and the gunbearer and the camels returned. They were all exhausted, for it must be remembered they had been travelling practically since the morning before. The man in the chair laid aside his elephant gun."

"By Jove, Culbertson, you tell it well," said Marshlands in the pause that ensued. Carson made no remark. The big man nodded in an absent-minded fashion. He was staring straight ahead of him, far out into the soft velvet curtain of the tropical night, as though he were actually seeing beyond the hills, beyond the years, to the dry, hot, flinty thorn scrub of the Guaso Nyero.

"They'd buried it," his deep, booming voice went on after awhile—"you know buried ivory is good forever—doesn't hurt it to go underground. Being white men, and intelligent ones, they had buried it barely beyond earshot of the camp—

just as well there as anywhere else. The rest of the night they had put in trekking around here, there and everywhere, so that anybody following the spoor wouldn't get much of anywhere. Plenty tried it. There were twenty-odd deserts that day; and every mother's son took the back track of those camels. Somalis are no fools. They already had the news from the other camp that cow ivory was contraband; and they were quite capable of putting two and two together. Fat lot of good it did them. They all overshot the mark; never occurred to any of them that it could be so near camp. Any of 'em except one old camel driver. He overshot too, but he soon came back. How he knew I don't know; perhaps he was like that old Johnny in the Arabian nights who deduced so much from tracks, and knew when the camels had gone on light. Anyhow he came back, and began to grub around with a stick perilous close to the proper place. The gun-bearer, who was up a tree watching for something like that, reported it to the white men in camp. One of them went out and attended to the case."

"How's that?" asked Carson.

"Scuppered him."

"Not *killed* him?"

Kingozi turned a wide stare on the young man. There was in it something blank, inscrutable, sinister. It was as though through the soft night had come a breath from the fierce veldt, as though for an instant veils had been rent showing the face of Africa.

"Why not?" asked Kingozi simply, after a moment. He looked away.

"If I were writing a story, I should call that the end of Part One," he went on. "And in writing the heading Part Two, I should add Ten Years Later!"

"But what became of the ivory?" interrupted Carson.

"It is there yet—most of it—buried, and only five living men know exactly where."

"Why hasn't it been taken out?" asked young Carson.

"It is impossible to get it out—the owners would like well enough to realize on it."

Carson jerked his legs from the arm-extensions of his chair and sat upright.

"Do you mean to tell me that all that wealth has remained buried there for years simply because these men couldn't get it out of the country?"

"Precisely that," replied Kingozi.

"But——"

"I know; but, believe me, the expedient you are about to suggest—whatever it is—has been thought of, and canvassed, and reluctantly abandoned long years ago. It looks simple—a big, wild continent, thousands of miles of unpoliced coastline. In reality, it is an impossible situation. I'm not going to canvass the possibilities—there are too many of them, but I'll run over a few. It is impossible to get it out through British East Africa, that's agreed. The stuff is contraband, and is confiscated where found. Suppose we try the East coast anywhere; it is a good three months' journey from where the ivory is buried to the sea; natives cannot keep a secret; many bearers would be required to carry out that amount of ivory; the route would have to be led somewhere through savage tribes. Long before the three months were up the authorities would

have wind of the expedition. Dispassionate figuring shows the chances to be a hundred to one against. The same objection applies to an attempt to pass to the south toward German—or better Portuguese—ports. The route leads through Uganda. The south and east are therefore closed.”

He paused to draw on his cheroot. His companions, their interest thoroughly intrigued, considered the problem attentively, with knitted brows. Lord Marshland was the first to drop back to a reclining position.

“You’re right,” he acknowledged.

“But——” interposed Carson again. Kingozi silenced him with a wave of the hand.

“There remain the north and the west. Undoubtedly that ivory could be carried up through Abyssinia to some port on the Red Sea and thence distributed to the markets of the world. But it would not arrive as a single consignment. Long before it would have dissipated, a tusk here, a tusk there, in *honga* to the avarice of the various petty chiefs, sultans, viziers, and other potentates through whose territory the caravan must march. No nation has ever got much change out of the

Abyssinians. If the original owners retained five per cent. of what they started with, they would be considered extremely lucky. In fact, I should consider them extremely lucky to get through alive. As to Somaliland, that would be a case of spear and loot without fail. The Somalis are a handsome and engaging people; but as has been recently discovered theirs is a poor coast on which to be wrecked. To the west is the width of the African continent. All the objections to the other routes apply to this."

"But, look here——" interposed Carson for the third time.

"It looks easy at first," said Kingozi, "but before you commit yourself, take time to think it over. If at the end of three days you still have a scheme that looks feasible, let me know. I'll put you in communication with some men who will make you money!" He chuckled. "Quite a few have that offer under advisement.

"We now come to what might be called Part Three of the yarn. Leading characters are an Englishman and his young brother, whom we will call Braxton; and one of the four ivory hunters

whom I will designate as Middleton. The two Englishmen were going out to East Africa as settlers. I met them all on one of the German ships, and for the usual three weeks saw a good deal of them as we wallowed and broiled down the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Our company was limited. There were the usual lot of petty German civil and military officers bound for Dar-es-salaam, gross, brusque, disagreeable, drinking from morning until night, noisy by evening, their heads shaved close to show pink knobs, hiving by themselves and everybody glad of it—I suppose they send their cubs down to fill the petty offices in their colonies. Also there were a Greek engineer and his Roumanian bride, a Belgian officer in charge of blooded horses to improve their stock in the upper Congo, three or four English and Americans going out for a shoot, a Commercial Agent or so—you know the lot. None of them interested me a great deal except those settler chaps. The elder, Seton Braxton, was the ordinary clean-cut young fellow of just under thirty, tanned, likeable, untrained to labour or the organization of his life, like plenty

others of his class, clipping his speech short, game for anything, high ideas but not much judgment, good example of your class, Marshlands, before it gets the hard knocks."

The nobleman bowed his ironic acknowledgments.

"But the youngster, who was called Charley, was a different sort. He had short curly hair, bright dancing eyes, rosy boyish cheeks, rounded chin, and small hands and feet. He was a slim chap, but fully in charge of himself—made of whipcord—the slender but graceful thing, you know. His voice was low and had a rich quality, except when he got excited or laughed. Then it ran up to a treble. I should have said he was just past the change of his voice.

"Everybody took to Charley immediately, even those little noisy German officers. He had an insatiate curiosity—was all over the ship, investigating everything, asking the most absurd questions. I used to wonder where and how the boy had been brought up; he possessed a fine mind, and had been well educated, but he had the most astonishing blank places of ignorance, often

about the most ordinary things, that the majority of men get as matters of practical experience. My conclusion that he had probably been brought up under shelter was corroborated by the care taken of him by his older brother. He looked after Charley like a dry nurse. I often wondered why the youngster did not resent this surveillance—most boys of spirit would have been inclined to kick over the traces. After all, a boy has to begin to go among men some time; and we were a pretty decent lot, as men go. Some of the more irresponsible concocted some sort of scheme to lure Charley into the smoking room and get him a bit tight. Sort of do the kid good; but Seton Braxton looked competent in some ways, and the scheme fell through.

“As I learned their situation, I felt a trifle sick over it; but I didn’t say a word. No use being a bird of ill-omen unless it will do some practical good.

“They were only sons, no collateral relatives, two thousand pounds in cash realized from the sale of their estate, and they were going out to East Africa as settlers!”

Kingozi had forgotten that he was—for the moment!—a peaceful and responsible Ship's Agent and had become again in spirit the old Afrikaner the elephant hunter, with the hunter's large and generous contempt of and distrust in all settling.

"If there is one country in the world," he went on with emphasis, "that is *not* a white man's country—to settle in—it is East Africa. Oh, I know all the stock arguments; I've read 'em by the ream in beautiful printed pamphlets issued by railroads, promoters—and Governments! But I've lived here a good many years. There's a curse on the country. Perhaps some day it will be lifted—science, inoculation, drainage—who knows?" His eye had become dreamy with speculation. He came back with a snap. "But now? Marshlands, can you pick me out six men—I'd say *one*, if it were not for the fact that there is always a percentage of ineradicable folly—six men, owning land, who have been in this country three years or over, whose property is not for sale?"

Lord Marshlands smiled and shook his grizzled head.

"You have the floor. I'm not going to dispute you—or corroborate you," he evaded diplomatically.

"Finest looking country in the world. Good climate in the highlands. A man does well for a while, and then something new comes along and hits him, something he never heard of before, some novelty in the way of wheat blights, or cattle disease—and he's wiped off the slate. Country's still there." Kingozi snorted explosively. "And no matter how healthy a man can keep himself, it's no place to raise children; and if you can't raise children it isn't a white man's country. Yet they lure 'em out here with their folders and their lies, and turn 'em loose, and to hell with 'em!"

"You said you'd been here some years, didn't you?" interposed Carson, with a blank, too-innocent expression.

Kingozi roared out his great laugh.

"Fair hit, youngster!" he acknowledged. "But I'm not a settler. I'm out for a free life, adventure—I don't know what. Dreeing my wierd, I suppose. And make no mistake, it's the greatest

country in the world to the adventurous spirit. It's the last frontier. What the race is going to use to bite on when it is gone I can't imagine—however, I won't be here. Fortunately most young fellows who think they come out here to be settlers, really, down deep, are after adventure, romance. It is romantic, you know. Even I, after all these years of it, have still a full appreciation.

“I must say the Braxtons had gone into it deeper than most of the young fools who rush out here blind. The youngster, Charley, was a perfect storehouse of book theory. He had read everything ever printed on the subject, I should think. And somebody in the firm had a level head. I rather suspect Charley, again. Anyway, he explained it to me in a sort of eager way he had.

“‘You see we can't afford to make mistakes,’ he told me. ‘We've got this two thousand pounds, and we neither of us have been taught to get another. So we've looked into matters pretty deeply and it seems more sensible to us to go in for something that naturally grows in the country rather

than to try to go in for things like wheat or wool-sheep that aren't indigenous.'

"I approved of that, and asked him what it was.

"'Coffee,' said he.

"Then, seeing I was interested, he opened up on coffee. You'd have no idea there was so much to know about coffee. By the time Charley had finished with me he had my brain convinced that it was a sure thing—I couldn't pick a flaw anywhere in the scheme. But I was an old Afri-kander; and there was something way down deep inside of me that wasn't convinced. There's a curse on the country, that's all there is to it. But I didn't tell Charley that; what was the use? He was all sanguine and sure. I was not so certain about Seton. He always hovered around uneasily, very silent, pulling his short moustache, and in his eyes an anxiety that Charley did not have.

"Well, I'm not going to spin this out, for I didn't start to tell you about the Braxtons' coffee plantation. We landed at Mombasa and immediately went up country. I started into the French Congo after ivory. Fine trip, all but

the finish. We lost most of our ivory because a pestiferous little French official went farther east than he had ever gone before. I suppose we *were* poaching—technically.

“When I got back to Nairobi and had seen all my friends I found that the Braxtons had found some land that was suitable out Fort Hall way. On my way to hunt elephants in Kenia I stopped to see them. They were living in a grass-roofed hut—one of these circular affairs built of papyrus stalks, dirt floor, peaked roof. Had out a bewildering lot of young coffee plants which they were cultivating themselves with the aid of whatever Kikuyus they could pick up. Living on buck, of which there were plenty, and mealie-meal mostly. Seton Braxton had killed his first lion, and Charley had been there to see; they had poison out for a leopard that had been hanging around; every time they went down near a papyrus swamp on their place they stood a chance of having to dodge a crossgrained old lot of buffalo; were anxiously figuring on keeping zebras out of their garden; heard hyenas every night—in fact, were living in a regular story book of

romance. All they needed was a little income to make the whole thing a howling success."

Kingozi grunted, and shifted his weight. The teak-wood chair creaked violently, and at the sound the alert, white-clad figure sprang from the shadow of the archway to his side.

"*Bwana nataka nini?*" inquired Simba.

"*Hapana,*" negatived Kingozi, and the boy faded away again. "Some years later the coffee plants grew up and began bearing. Oodles of coffee berries. All that was required was to pick and sack them and cart them out. Then the income! Only difficulty with that little scheme was that there was nobody to pick and sack. The farm, mind you, was just off Kenia, right in the heart of the Kikuyu country. Every day down the track past the Braxtons' door minced and teetered enough able-bodied dandies to have taken care of ten farms the size of Braxtons'. They had on their best feather—or tripe—headdresses, their best oiled goat-skins, their shiniest brass wire armlets and jewellery; they were glistening with castor oil and red paint-clay until they looked like bronze; each carried his spear and his length of

sugar cane—but there weren't ten ounces of work in the lot. From their point of view why should they work? they had all they wanted.

"But," and in the vehemence of his contention Kingozi sat bolt upright, "from the point of view of the settler—the Braxton people—who had been lured out here by a paternal Government—how about them? Nobody had told them of any shortage of labour! Indeed rather a point had been made of the 'proximity of populous native tribes.' No white man can long perform violent physical labour in that climate. He'd need help even if he did. The Braxtons made desperate efforts.' Direct dealing with the natives was of little use. Appeals to and arguments with representatives of Governments, from the local D. C.'s up to His Excellency, brought out only a horrified uplifting of the hands over the idea of 'forced labour'!"

"Do you believe in forced labour?" asked Lord Marshlands quietly.

"I don't know. But I believe in consistency. If this is a black man's country, then we should leave it to the black man. That's a perfectly

logical view; but if it is adopted, then on what excuse do we allow settlers at all, let alone try to attract them? If we admit the white man to a hold at all, then we should do our best to make conditions liveable and at the same time to educate the black from his savage condition. And the first step toward that last is to teach him the dignity and necessity of labour. Of course he wouldn't undertake it of his own accord; but then mighty few children go to school of their own accord. But we don't let children off from school just because they don't want to go. That's forced labour. When you come down to it, most labour is forced by one thing or another. But I'm not going into economics; I'm trying to tell a story. Point is that no government has a right to take up the 'white man's burden' without improving the subject race; and no government has a right to decoy in settlers and leave 'em in the lurch. When the two exist side by side, it's just foolish.

"However, there you are. Braxtons with every cent invested, a good property, and no means to work it. They managed to get a little fly-by-

night labour from time to time, and shipped out a little coffee, of course; but they ran behind, and they worried themselves sick over it, their coffee bushes deteriorated, and they were headed straight for trouble. 'Course they borrowed from that German Jew chap in Nairobi as much as he'd advance, which merely got them in deeper.

"Now *enter* one of the owners of the buried cow ivory. Remember I told you there was one on the ship going out—I called him Middleton? Well, he was hunting professionally up in that Kenia district, saw a good deal of the Braxtons, and got interested. Soft-hearted sort of chap. The elder Braxton he was sorry for, and all that, but young Charley especially got him. As things grew worse and worse, the young fellow's spirits gradually died out. He was game all right, and whistled and sang around as gaily as ever, but anyone who knew and liked him could see that the whimsical upward quirk to the corners of his mouth in repose was becoming a wistful downward quirk; and, I don't know why it was, but that little fact was more pathetic, more harrowing—yes, more *heartbreaking*—than actual starvation and

want would have been. It was like the extinguishing of a brave bright flame."

Kingozi gulped at his glass of lime juice and soda. Lord Marshlands glanced at him covertly, and smiled a secret little smile.

"It struck Middleton that way. He did all he could for them, even to bullying old Kurioki for men. Kurioki sent down a few, because he liked Middleton, and they stuck for awhile, but their enthusiasm died, and so did Kurioki's, and his help proved only a palliative. Middleton had no money—what hunter ever did have? He offered them what he had saved, when they all came to the point of discussing the situation. The Braxtons refused. Seton had good sense; he pointed out that what was needed was a round sum to carry out a scheme he had evolved for importing Indians. He had faith in it, but he could get no one else to believe in it to the extent of financing him. Then after a time Middleton told of this *cache* of cow ivory. He did not tell them that in doing so he was breaking a solemn agreement with his three partners in the enterprise, for they had promised each other that no attempt should

be made to remove the ivory unless all were consulted and all involved. Middleton was a man of experience, the soul of honour. I do not suppose he had ever before broken a promise in his life. In breaking this one he sacrificed his self-respect utterly—I believe that's what we started to talk about, wasn't it? By his campfire of evenings he used to hate himself. Probably a dozen times he resolved to throw the whole matter over, to bury himself in the French Congo. What were the Braxtons to him? Nevertheless, preparations went forward. For the three of them had evolved a scheme. This, I repeat, is the sacrifice I spoke of. Its magnitude you could understand only by understanding the sort of a man Middleton had been.

The agreement was, I believe, that they were to unearth Middleton's share of the cow ivory, convey it to the coast, sell it, and with the net proceeds rescue the coffee plantation with Indian coolies. Middleton was to have some share in the farm. Then they were all to sail booming to immense prosperity. Personally, I don't believe Middleton had any glowing faith in it as a commercial venture: his interest was red cheeked,

curly haired, dancing eyed Charley, with the mouth whose corners were becoming wistful.

"It took lots of talk to settle the details. Middleton put it pretty strong that their help in getting out the ivory was worth fifty per cent. of its value to him, and that giving him a share in the farm was almost overdoing it before the Braxtons would go in. As it was, they were pathetically grateful. Then they had to settle the small detail of how to get the stuff out. That took lots more talk. I can see the earnest little group around the board table under the peak of the grass hut, a paraffin lamp throwing their shadows against the jumble of things such structures contain—rifles, saddles, *kibokos*, water bottles—Middleton's boy, Simba, with the painted filed teeth of his tribe showing through his perpetual half grin, squatted by the wattle door, and outside the voices of the African night. Schemes that would have looked absurd across commonplace mahogany took on a semblance of possibility here. I must repeat, it was all romantic, what with the cries of hyenas and the roar of lions outside—you'll soon hear it, Carson."

Kingozi sighed, stared distastefully, as one new-awakened at the dim, motionless palm tops opposite, and resumed:

“They evolved this; and it was really not bad. Middleton picked up forty donkeys. This number they figured would suffice to pack the ivory and necessary provisions. With them they took Simba and four Wakamba known to Middleton. It was given out that they were bound on a trading expedition to the Rendile. That was plausible enough, as half the settlers in the Protectorate drift into trading, sooner or later, to eke out their farms. To carry out the illusion they sacked dummy loads of trade goods. As far as Meru *boma* they treated themselves to the luxury of plenty of donkey drivers; but from Meru secrecy was desirable, so they sacked that lot and went on alone with their Wakambas. I did not tell you the plan, did I? It was to pack the donkeys down the Guaso Nyero toward Lorian, then to strike boldly across the desert country in an attempt to hit the headwaters of a stream now called the McKinnon. If they found that, they were sure of water. Down the McKinnon they

would trek until it joined the Tana. At the Tana they intended to construct canoes—dug-outs in which to float to the sea. The donkeys, in charge of two of the Wakamba, would return leisurely up the Tana. Once at the coast a native *dhow* would sail them up-coast to the mouth of the Juba, whence a tramp steamer——

“It was a perfectly plausible scheme. But do you know its defect? It had no margin of safety. Forty donkeys—no less—were required for transporting the loads. Three canoes would be necessary, with two men in each—making six—and that with the two donkey men covered the personnel. If things worked out just right, if there were no delays, if no men got sick or were killed—— The Braxtons saw no flaw in it at all. Middleton, an old experienced hand, perceived the weakness but found no way to remedy it. More men meant more supplies, more donkeys, more danger of leakage—and, above all, more money! Although he did not say so, Middleton had fairly pawned his watch to get together what he had. I do not think he can fairly be blamed. He used his best judgment and experience; and really

managed to spread inadequate resources pretty thin.

“From Meru *boma* to Campi ya Nyama Yangu is two days’ march. It was only the evening of the tenth day, however, that they were well away with the ivory. The three whites and Simba had dug it up, carried it tusk by tusk to some little distance, and then Middleton and Simba had skillfully obliterated their trail. Only then did Middleton bring up the other Wakamba. He thought he could trust them, but there was no sense in sharing the secret with too many.

“You, Marshlands, know what these people were up against. Carsons cannot appreciate it until he has packed donkeys—African donkeys. The saddling, loading, and driving of them is not only exhausting physical labour, but is the most exasperating, patience-breaking devil of a job—natives get on with it fairly well, because they take cussedness repeated as part of the scheme of the unwise, but it is no white man’s work. In this instance white men had to do it. Then the brutes have to be herded and grazed by daylight and each night a dense thorn *boma* has to be cut

and built. Somebody has to keep up fires! Why? Because donkeys are a lion's idea of caviare to coffee inclusive. Even full manned a donkey *safari* is bad; undermanned it is hell.

They marched two days down the Guaso Nyero, and then filled their waterskins and struck across. Nobody in the party had ever been to the McKinnon, but Simba had talked with a Wakamba hunter, and thought he knew of a kopje that would give them a direction. That Guaso Nyero country, a hundred yards from the river, is dry as a bone, grown with scattering low thorn trees, covered with tinkling flinty little stones. As the elevation is low, it is fearfully hot. The thorn scrub has plenty of game at certain seasons and too many rhinos always. It's bad enough when you know just where you're going. These people had a cruising radius of three days—by the end of that time the donkeys had to have water. They planned to reach out two days, and then, if unsuccessful, to scuttle back in one to the Guaso Nyero and take a fresh start. Naturally they left most of the donkeys and the ivory until they had scouted a way. At the third trial they struck the

McKinnon. It was much nearer than they had supposed, in fact only a few hours' march. But, notice, I said they made two other hard trials. Keep|track of the cruel work they were doing, for I shall ask you later to appreciate its effects.

"On their way back from discovering the oasis of thick jungle and trees in which the McKinnon took its rise, they met Simba in light travelling order. Simba had been left with the donkeys, but had followed the scouting party by its spoor.

"'Bwana,' said he, 'two donkeys are dead, and two more are sick.'

"They hurried back to camp, full of foreboding. Middleton caught one of the apparently healthy beasts and pinched the skin of the neck between his thumb and forefinger. Instead of springing back elastically, the skin remained in a ridge that only slowly subsided. Hastily he proceeded from one to another applying this test. He returned to where Seton and Charley were staring dolefully at the dead beasts.

"'Nineteen of the creatures are struck by tse-tse,' he told them briefly. 'We have seventeen

healthy animals. I don't know where they ran into the fly; if here, they may all be down by morning.'

"He told them what he knew. Four of the animals—the two that were dead and the two Simba had described as 'sick'—were out of it. The nineteen fly-struck beasts might last six hours or six months. Sooner or later they would surely die, but they would be perfectly strong and serviceable to the very hour of their doom.

" 'The first time they get wet or chilled, they are gone,' said Middleton.

"They discussed the situation, and at length decided to push on. To turn back now was certain ruin. Nobody knew how far distant was the Tana, but it was hoped that three weeks would suffice. The donkeys ought to last that long. They solved the problem of the four lost beasts by abandoning some of their outfit and several loads of provisions.

"So they started. The McKinnon heads in a big area of scrub forest—where incidentally were all kinds of elephant sign—which soon thins to a narrow jungle strip. On either hand the country

is dry, barren, and hot, grown sparsely with mimosas. Game was fairly abundant; which was fortunate, for they depended largely on it. Ordinarily they could have made the journey in two weeks; but actually it took them six. This was because a dozen of the donkeys succumbed to a stray shower wandering from Kenia—the only time it had rained for six or eight months, I suppose. After that they were forced to relay back and forth, a tiresome process, as each march had to be made three times. However, they landed at the Tana finally, so that was all right. But the point, the great point—one you, Carson, well-found, well-fed, well-nourished, will be unable to appreciate when you *safari* up there—was that instead of a two weeks' picnic they had undergone two months of the hardest physical labour and mental anxiety, in the worst of climates. Seton was a frail brown ghost of himself; and Middleton, tough old stager as he was, recognized deep within him that drained, exhausted feeling that is the beginning of the dread listlessness of the tropics. Charley's round cheeks had thinned, but his laughing spirit was unquenched. To tell the

truth, he had been much spared—without his knowledge—by the older men.

“However, there they were, and the wide, brown Tana rolling sullenly by. They rested two days, and then, leaving the ivory, they marched down stream to determine where were the last of the rapids. Then while two of the Wakamba, under direction of Middleton, chewed away at making dug-outs, the rest relayed the treasure to the spot.

“The making of the canoes was a terrible labour. Not every species of African tree will float; indeed, most go to the bottom like lead. Then, as you can imagine, it is desirable to find one as near the bank as possible. However, at last they were finished; and the product floated, right side up. The white men were even more tired; but now, they told themselves, they could rest. The broad Tana would bear them to the sea. They left the donkeys, and two of the men, and set sail.

“Followed day after day of paddling and floating, sometimes through high forest growths, sometimes in blasted thorn scrub, always on the pol-

lished, brown, shiny, sullen surface of the sinister stream, with the sun scorching them like a burning glass when it could. Crocodiles slipped from the mud banks as they approached, hippos by the score blew and snorted at them, going down at the last moment like submarines, staring at them with bulging eyes. At night they tried to get back to higher land, away from the river; and at first in the upper reaches they succeeded, but soon the Tana took to its incredible windings in the lowlands, and this was impossible. Seton was the first to get the fever. He had a bad go." Kingozi turned to the young Englishman. "African fever hits you very suddenly. You feel as right as a trivet one moment, and the next, plop! you're down and off your head. Seton's go lasted five days and left him weak as a cat. They rigged him a place to lie, but his canoe, short handed, was slow. No sooner was he over it than Middleton came down. Middleton was pretty well 'salted,' and his goes of fever were lighter than those of a newcomer. The Wakamba, too, had their share. Only Simba and young Charley escaped. Don't know what they'd have

done without Charley just then. He was as good as a hospital nurse. Got thin under it, and looked pretty tired; but they were all that.

"The middle Tana is crooked. On every point are native huts. About every ten miles is a native sultan of one sort or another. Nowadays they know all about white men; but then they weren't broken in to our noble race, and they had to be treated diplomatically. If there is anything in the world that fills the soul with a greater weariness than, after a hard day when rest is the one thing that a man needs, to be forced to entertain a lot of savages, I'd like to know what it is! *They* don't need rest, the beggars! They're cheerfully willing to sit up all night if it proves amusing; and it paid, then, to be amusing! Doesn't sound like much, does it? Wouldn't have been much to fresh, well-fed men. These people had done too much, had exposed themselves to too much hardship for the tropics, were too full of fever. Their nerves were stretched to breaking. But they had to keep a firm hold and a smiling face, and converse elaborately over nothing with childish, naked savages, and do little tricks, and

—otherwise, a spear in the back, you understand. But that isn't fair. The natives treated them well—native fashion. They came through alive and unrobbed. It is the nature of the African to love his *shauri*. But when they turned in, often they could not sleep, exhausted as they were. They lay awake staring upward, and the hippos boomed, and the dreadful, untiring fever-owl uttered its note over and over until they thought they would go mad.

“As the Tana approaches the coast its overflow bed widens. In the dry season it sulks sluggishly through the most twisted channel possible. If it were any more crooked, the river would not know which way to go. In the rainy season it overflows and forms a vast sea. There are more hippos to the square mile down there than any place I know.

“They had anticipated reaching the sea before the monsoons, but you can imagine their delays, and the monsoons began early. It came on to rain. The river rose in a night, and the banks overflowed. For three days they were wet, they were unable to land, they had no fire, they ate no

cooked food. Nothing much, plenty of us have done the like; but I am wasting a lot of breath if I have not conveyed to you what an accumulation of little things means. Seton had fallen into a black melancholia. He was very weak from his fever, he could not eat, he could not sleep, he had been much in the sun. Most of the time he plied his paddle feebly and stared at the bottom of the canoe. The only time he showed a spark of animation was when Charley, his merry face concealing a deep anxiety, deliberately made fun. Then Seton's spark of spirit stirred deep down within him, and he achieved a slow, tired smile. Of course you know what happened next."

Lord Marshlands nodded.

"I've seen 'em like that—and so had Middleton, I fancy."

"You must believe me, Middleton thoroughly realized. He scarcely slept; but he could not achieve the impossible. The shot waked him from a sound sleep, but he was on his feet before the report had died. The men knew, too. They were already squatted close about their little

fire, chattering together, and glancing toward the dim, huddled outline on the white man's bed. Only Charley, who as usual had slept somewhat apart, was at first undisturbed. After a moment he raised himself sleepily on his elbow and asked what was the row.

"'Shot at a hyena,' Middleton told him briefly.

"Satisfied with this he fell back asleep.

"Middleton had until morning to figure on meeting the situation. He sat staring into the fire. The hippos were booming, and the moon was striking dimly through a mist. It was a disagreeable, almost an impossible, task this—breaking the news—he realized fully that he should give his mind to it. Strangely enough, for the moment he could not do so. He thought of all kinds of trivial things that circled widely, ever drawing toward a centre, until he was brooding sadly on that most awful of messages Africa tells—the shortness of time, the flickering passage of years, how quickly it all—hardship, toil, thirst, disease that at the time seemed inescapable and interminable—becomes a thing of yesterday. And in that light for the moment he

saw the present crisis, the camp by the sullen, eternal river shrouded in the mists of the moon, and the miasma became as small as a pin-point.

“‘This, too, will pass,’ he muttered to himself out of the only comforting philosophy Africa leaves her sons. His head suddenly blew to vast dimensions——

“The next thing he saw was a canopy of leaves close over his head. The shadow lay dense beneath it. He heard the gurgle of waters and felt a slight, unstable lurch, so he knew he was in a canoe. Before him, wielding a paddle, he recognized the slight form of Charley. Behind him he heard the steady swishing of another paddle.

“After a few moments he had gathered his faculties.

“‘Charley,’ he called huskily.

“The boy turned. Middleton was choked into silence at his appearance. The roundness, the colour of his cheeks was gone. His eyes were sunken in their sockets; his lips were parted over his teeth. In his weakened state Middleton received the shock as a man receives a blow in the chest. But he was an old Afrikander, accustomed

to an iron discipline and use of his faculties in circumstances and under conditions where another would have considered himself too ill to move.

“‘Where are we?’ he asked.

“‘On the river.’

“‘How long have I been sick?’

“‘Six days.’

“Middleton struggled to a sitting position. The river was empty except for themselves; and he noticed that the canoe was riding high and light.

“‘Where are the others?’ he asked.

“‘The Wakamba deserted—all except Simba,’ Charley told him in a hard, level voice. ‘We had to abandon the other two canoes.’

“Middleton digested this for some time.

“‘And the ivory?’ he inquired at length.

“‘Is buried back there,’ said Charley still in a hard voice—‘with him,’ he added under his breath with infinite tenderness.

“They journeyed down the river. Middleton now realized that his illness had been no mere jungle fever; but that he had touched the edges

of the dreaded and fatal blackwater. He was very weak. Day after day he lay on his back; and he had full leisure to contemplate the wonder of Charley. He pictured the dreadful moment of discovery, alone save for old Simba and a delirious man. And from that starting point his listless mind went back foot by foot, day by day, to Meru *boma*; and because he was very weak and very tired, the tremendous weariness of it filled his soul to the lip. Beneath it he lay inert, as a mummied king might lie beneath the weight of a thousand years. And he came to look on Charley with a sort of awe, as a bright and shining spirit of courage that could not be crushed. The mere contemplation of the effort needed to buckle his belt filled Middleton with a sick, dead disgust. Yet Charley paddled, and cooked, and nursed him, and carried on long, difficult negotiations with savages—and all the time he was bearing the dead weight of those months of toil and the living horror of that discovery at dawn.

“But the weakness began to ebb. Middleton recommenced, feebly, to assume his hold on life by *doing*—little things, slowly, one at a time.

And then, with new strength, came a great, unspoken affection and tenderness for this spirit that had refused to yield.

"About four o'clock one afternoon they rounded one of the numberless bends beneath the cut banks of the river and saw the sea. Charley stiffened in his place, then with a queer cry pitched flat forward on his face.

"Simba carried him ashore and laid him under a cocoanut tree, running immediately to the river for water. Middleton tore apart the neckband of Charley's shirt and stooped to listen at the heart. During an instant he knelt, staring wildly. Then, as he heard Simba's returning footsteps, he hastily drew the shirt together again. For little Charley, Charley of the soft cheeks, the dancing eyes, the curling hair, the mouth with the corners that quirked up, Charley of the indomitable spirit—was a girl!"

Kingozi's bold eyes were staring straight before him, and they were misted with tears. He gulped quite frankly.

"That's about all there is to that yarn," he said gruffly after a moment. "General disaster all

'round. Farm mortgaged, every cent spent, ivory still buried, brother dead. Nice cheerful mess. Queer thing about it all was that the girl, just as soon as she was found out, became all girl. See what I mean? Up to that time she had been doing two men's work, and running the whole show. Now she just collapsed. Didn't know what to do next, or where to turn. Middleton knew all right.

" 'The Bishop of Zanzibar is a friend of mine,' said he decidedly. 'We're going to get married.'

"She looked him in the eyes.

" 'You are a brave and true man,' she said, 'but you do not mean that as I would have you mean it.'

"Middleton swore that he did, and he believed it, but she persisted, and long afterward Middleton knew that she was right. There was nothing more to be said. They got into their canoe again and proceeded to the mouth of the river. There they found a green tent awaiting them. An officer of the E. A. P. called them ashore. He peered into the canoe.

" 'Where's your ivory?' he asked.

"But Middleton was a hundred per cent. stronger than he had been the day before.

"‘What ivory?’ he snapped back. ‘I want food and transportation for myself and this young lady, here.’

"‘Young lady!’ says the officer. He looked her over, and he looked Middleton over, and Simba, and their outfit. That officer was no fool, or he wouldn’t be in the E. A. P.; he could add up a simple sum. He grinned a little under his moustache. ‘And no ivory,’ he went on. ‘Well, I was sent down to arrest you for smuggling out cow ivory, Middleton, but I fancy there’s some mistake.’

"That’s all, except that Middleton duly repented of his disloyalty to his partners, and confessed everything, ate humble pie, and got himself forgiven. Fact remains that he sacrificed his word and honour and self-respect. And really at heart didn’t give a damn. It’s always that way. And the ivory is all here yet, underground; three quarters of it near the Guaso Nyero; the other quarter, guarded by a dead man’s bones, on the lower Tana. As I remarked, Carson, if you

have any feasible schemes let me know. Well, it's getting late, and the night wind is coming to cool things off. Don't forget you're coming over to tiffin with me to-morrow."

"But the girl?" cried Carson.

"Oh, she married the E. A. P. officer," replied Kingozi. "That worry came out all right."

He heaved his great body from the teak-wood lazy chair and stood upright, stretching his muscles and looking blankly off into the darkness. Suddenly, without another word, he stalked out, followed by Simba as by his shadow. For a time neither of the other men stirred. The night wind from the Indian Ocean was just beginning to rustle the bamboo curtains, and with it came the first breath of the coolness that permitted sleep.

"By Jove!" murmured Carson at last; and fell again into ruminative contemplation of Kingozi's tale. A thought struck him. "Look here, Marshlands," he said. "Do you believe all that? It's a topping yarn, of course, but how could Culbertson know all that that Johnny, Middleton, thought and felt and all that? Rum, I call it!"

Lord Marshlands smiled quietly.

"Didn't you gather that Culbertson was telling his own story?" he asked.

Young Carson contemplated this idea.

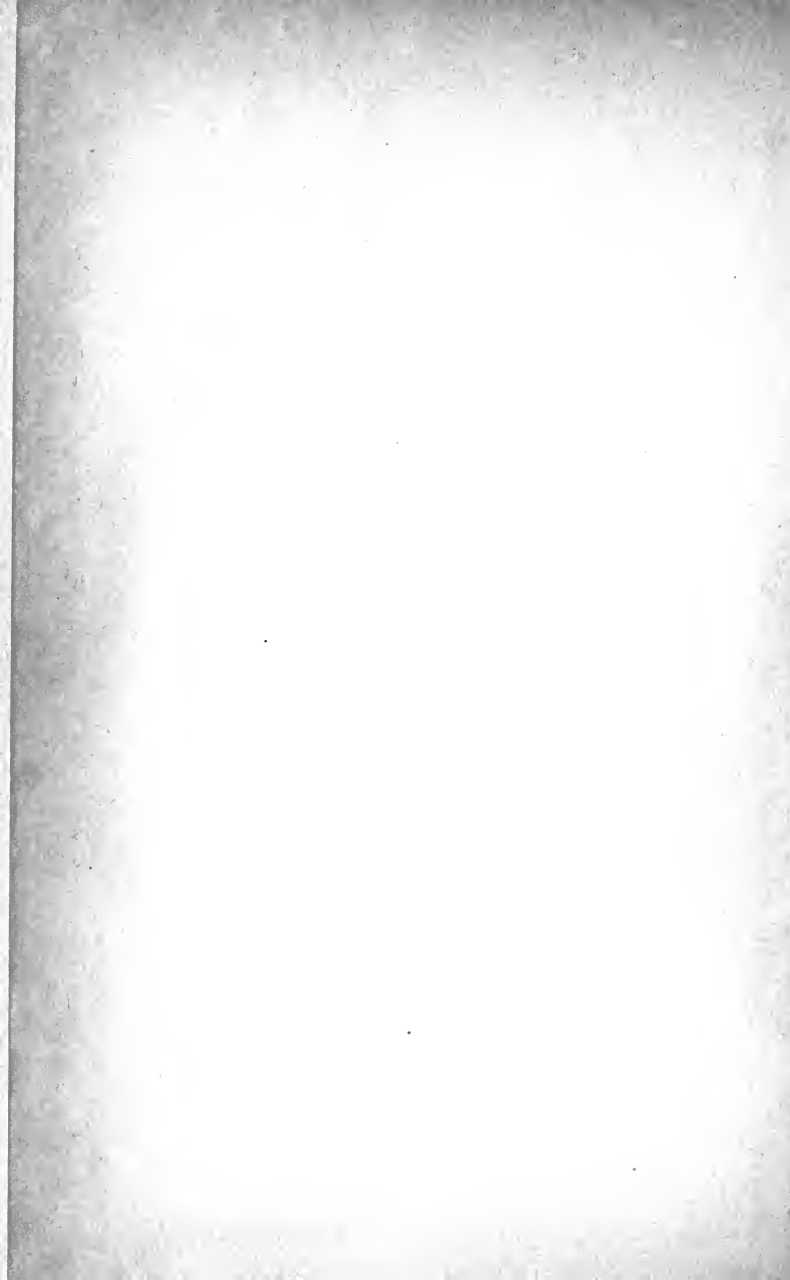
"By Jove!" he exclaimed. Then after a moment: "I wonder he didn't marry that girl. She sounded ripping!"

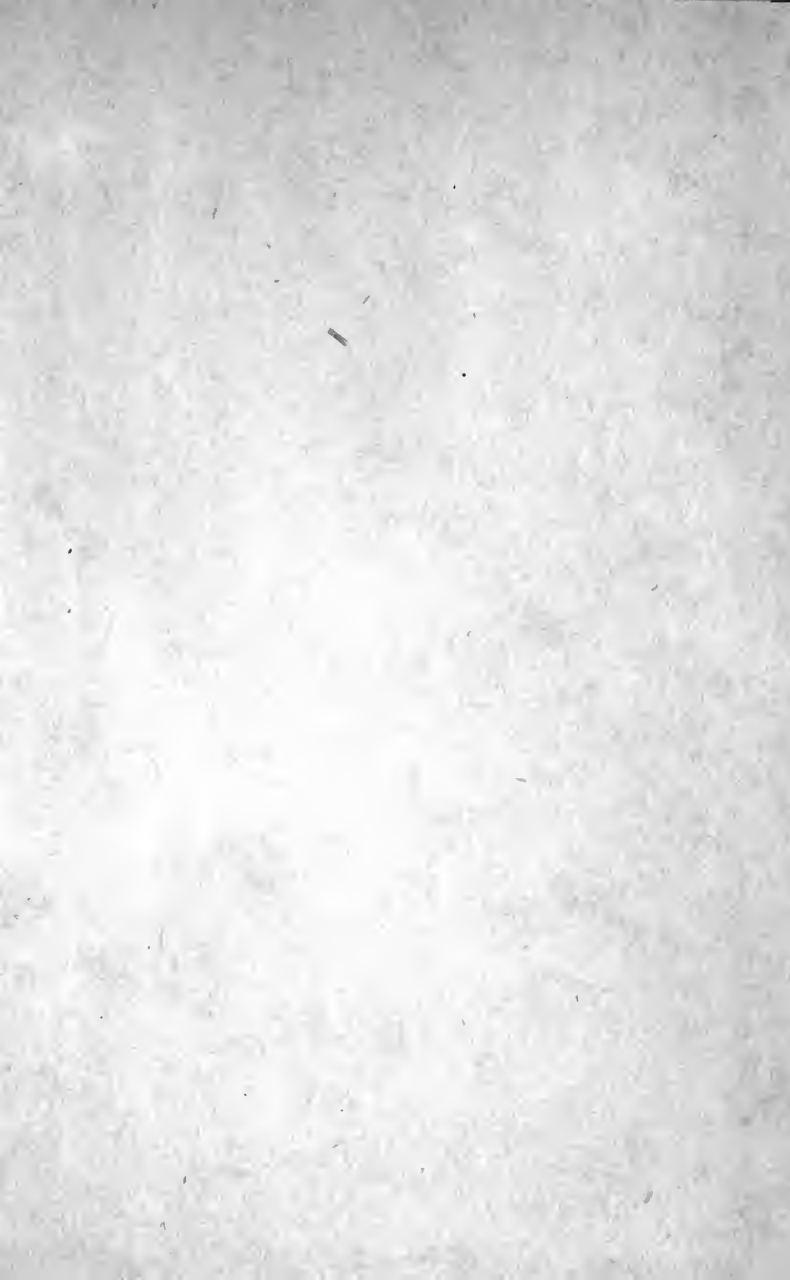
Marshlands shook his head.

"No man knows the mysteries of Africa; and no man yet has ever guessed the secrets of Kingozi's heart," he said.

THE END







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